the weekly Standard

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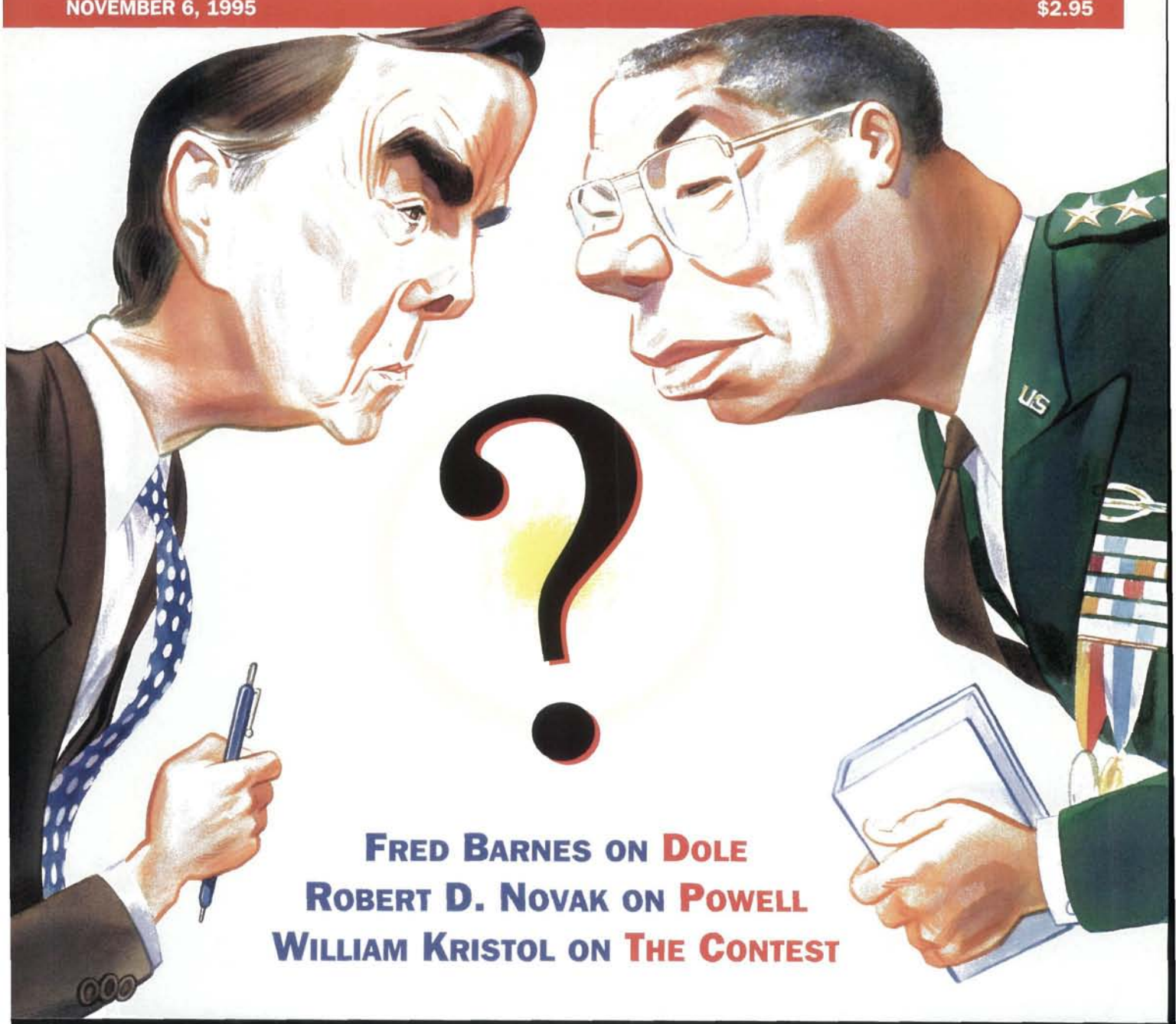

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Monopolies Win, You Lose.

People are speaking out against the telecommunications bills passed this past summer by the Senate and the House.

People who are concerned about higher prices, less competition, and fewer voices being heard. People outside the telecommunications industry.

People who favor deregulation -- but believe we're missing an historic opportunity to do it right. Here's a sampling:

USA TODAY "Monopolies win, you lose."

The Boston Globe "...consumers...were short-changed in the legislative process."

The Sacramento Bee "...the bill leaves the Baby Bells...with too much power to choke off competition and raise rates to local customers in order to subsidize their ventures into the long-distance field... this bill appears to tolerate levels of concentration that could effectively drive out any diversity in opinion or information in certain communities."

The New York Times "... it risks putting local phone companies in a position to drive rivals out of business ...it could also end up concentrating control of the main media outlets -- newspaper, TV and radio -- in too few hands... In rural areas, under this bill, a powerful media magnate could buy up *every* source of news, including the local phone company."

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH "Prices would rise... [It] goes much too far."

The Oregonian "...a single owner could control all the media outlets and communications links in a given market -- a scary monopoly."

THE DENVER POST "If the current bill becomes law, phone prices may rise and consumers will have fewer -- not more -- choices."

WORCESTER TELEGRAM & GAZETTE "...the legislation would extend the monopolistic control of the seven Regional Bell Operating Companies...by permitting them to enter the long-distance marketplace *before* they are forced to face local telephone service competition from long-distance carriers or cable companies."

The Philadelphia Inquirer "Slow down in deregulating the info highway, or the public will get run over."

BusinessWeek "If Congress really wants a free phone market, with the competition and lower prices that will come with it, it shouldn't be quite so generous to those local monopolists, the Baby Bells."

THE TENNESSEAN "...the problem with the bill is that it removes most telephone and cable rate restrictions without first assuring that competition is in place."

The Seattle Times "...the bill would intensify the communications industry's instinct to monopolize markets and raise prices."

the Charleston Gazette The State Newspaper "...the bill trashes long-time rules that have restricted concentration of media ownership... Deregulation and 'reform' have increasingly become code words for freeing huge corporations from the government oversight that prevents them from gouging the public and developing stifling monopolies."

Chicago Business Crain's "...the telecommunications bill winding its way through Congress would maintain local phone service monopolies in Chicago, and most of the rest of the country..."

Chicago Sun-Times "Until the public is convinced that its interests are being served, special interest legislation can well wait on hold."

Detroit Free Press "This bill would tilt the field even further in favor of existing cable TV and phone companies. In the end, the trick would be on consumers."

The Competitive Long Distance Coalition

CompTel AT&T LDDS WorldCom MCI Sprint cwa ACTA

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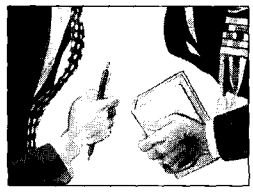

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Dole Sets Back Regulatory Reform

As one who has closely followed regulatory reform, I was surprised to see Matthew Rees's article ("Robb to the Rescue," Oct. 16) asserting that comprehensive regulatory reform is likely to pass this year. Though the chances have improved somewhat, Senate approval of such legislation is still a long shot. With the departure of Sen. Bob Packwood, Republicans need to find not two, but three Democratic votes to obtain cloture.

The truth is, enthusiasm for Bob Dole's regulatory reform bill, at least among conservatives, dwindled after he gave away the store in a deal with Sen. J. Bennett Johnston. For example, Dole agreed to allow regulations to be exempted from the cost-benefit analysis provisions of the bill if the agency with jurisdiction "finds that conducting cost-benefit analysis is impracticable due to an emergency that is likely to result in significant harm." This is an enormous loophole as the term "emergency" is never defined.

But the bill got even worse during floor reconsideration: A series of weakening amendments was approved, including one raising the threshold for regulations subject to cost-benefit analysis from $50 million to $100 million, meaning it would provide little relief to small-business owners and individuals.

DAVID RIDENOUR
WASHINGTON, DC

Keep the Jack-Booted Thugs

As an NRA member, I agree with Dave Shiflett ("Second Amendment Blues: The NRA Under the Gun," Oct. 23). The NRA must be careful not to isolate itself from the larger society. But a strong case can be made for supporting present NRA policies.

Right now, the NRA is significantly closer to the mood in the country than its critics are. Look at the NRA's enemies: Handgun Control, the media, the Democratic party, and the ACLU. These are not people wanting to engage in open debate. For the most part, they are hard-core ideologues.

As the political environment changes, so will the NRA. After the '96 elections, perhaps the NRA can lay down its sword and go back to running shooting competitions. But as long as the enemies of the Republic roam the halls of power, the NRA has a solemn duty to maintain its present posture.

PETE SKURKISS
CHESTER TOWNSHIP, NJ

ADL Spurns Farrakhanism

Given that the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) has probably been the most outspoken critic of Louis Farrakhan in recent years, and that Farrakhan now describes the League as part of a secret conspiracy controlling America and oppressing blacks, your editorial's suggestion ("Farrakhan's Swamp of Hatred," Oct. 23) that ADL does not adequately oppose the Nation of Islam leader is laughable.

Apparently, ADL's statement that we "understand and support" the goals of the Million Man March somehow indicated to your editorialist that we find Farrakhan "harmless," apart from his anti-Semitism. This is demonstrably false—ADL has published eight reports detailing not only Farrakhan's anti-Semitism but his racism, anti-Christian bigotry, homophobia, and sexism.

We have stated: "America is one country, not two. The separation of races flouts the nation's brilliant diverse culture and founding principles of tolerance and justice. That these ideals have yet to become a reality for most African-Americans is all the more reason to spurn Farrakhanism."

The ADL knows only too well of Farrakhan's repulsive views and program, and of the dead end of paranoia and racial hatred he offers America.

ABRAHAM H. FOXMAN
NEW YORK, NY

THE EDITORS RESPOND: Our objection to the ADL's discussion of the Million Man March was that the ADL seemed to excuse the marchers for their responsibility in heeding a call from Farrakhan to march in solidarity with him. Despite the ecstatic press coverage of the march, we still believe that the ADL and other organizations were far too ginger in their treatment of the march because of their desire to support its purported goals while continuing to condemn Farrakhan. That impulse is understandable; it's also intellectually and spiritually untenable.

Harvard in Denial

Elena Neuman ("Harvard's Sins of Admission," Oct. 9) accurately revealed the Harvard government department's use of double standards and race-norming in its graduate admissions policies. Regrettably, Harvard officials have reacted by denying the facts, even though they were undisputedly documented by Professor Gary King two years ago.

Government department chairman Kenneth Shepsle says, "We do not have separate admissions procedures or separate standards for minorities and nonminorities." Administrative dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences Margot Gill says, "There is no lower threshold for minority students." These denials have put Shepsle and Gill at odds with King, who is candid enough to admit that his department did consider minority students separately.

The real issue here is intellectual honesty, which I dare say is the most important issue among scholars and intellectuals. Affirmative-action advocates are forced to live in a perpetual state of denial. Perhaps they should ponder the words of Socrates, who said that the true lover of wisdom hates "the lie in the soul" more than anything else.

ROBERT P. KRAYNAK
HAMILTON, NY

Aristocratic Impotence

I tremendously enjoyed Robert Weissberg's "The Joys of Gibberish" (Oct. 23). He echoes Alexis de Tocqueville, who believed that such jargon was characteristic of aristocratic literary culture, and that it would not flourish under democratic systems of governance. In *Democracy in America* he writes:

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"It will sometimes happen that the members of the literary class, always living amongst themselves, and writing for themselves alone, will entirely lose sight of the rest of the world, which will infect them with a false and labored style . . . Such are the natural perils of literature among aristocracies. Every aristocracy that keeps itself entirely aloof from the people becomes impotent, a fact which is as true in literature as it is in politics."

Tocqueville could never have anticipated how distant the American professoriate would grow from the citizenry it is intended to serve. He is certainly correct, however, in citing the literary and political impotence of such modes of discourse.

PETER N. WARREN
WASHINGTON, DC

ZIONISM RECONSIDERED

To list all the blatant inaccuracies, distortions, and misreadings of history in Yoram Hazony's "The End of Zionism" (Oct. 9) would require an article as long as the original.

In order to attack the recent peace agreement between Israel and the PLO, Hazony has produced a revisionist reading of the history of Zionism as grotesque in its misrepresentations as any of the anti-Zionist "New Historians."

Rather than debate those whose views of the peace accord or of Zionism are different from his, Hazony takes a different tack: He rewrites history, retroactively expelling from the Zionist movement all those who disagree with his extreme views. Thus, his list of Jewish intellectuals to whom Zionism was "an abomination" and who "all rejected Zionism" includes none other than Martin Buber, who joined the Zionist movement in 1898, was appointed editor of its central weekly organ *Die Welt* in 1901, founded the so-called "Democratic Faction" of Zionism, and who remained a leading and influential Zionist for six decades—including brave and selfless service to the Zionist cause in Nazi Germany.

Whether one agrees with Buber's vision of Zionism or not, to read him out of the history of that movement is an act of either utter ignorance or deliberate deceit.

Indeed, Hazony even distorts the history of the Israeli right: To claim that "Likud and its sister parties ha[ve] no tradition of intellectual discourse to speak of" is either totally ignorant or maliciously arrogant. Has Hazony ever read a page of Vladimir Jabotinsky, the brilliant founder and ideologue of Revisionist Zionism, or parsed a poem by Uri Zvi Greenberg, the bard of the Israeli right?

Hazony may think he is being cute or clever by writing to an American conservative audience not familiar with the details of Israeli or Zionist history, but one should not allow such claims—and countless others in this utterly reckless article—to pass unopposed.

MICHAEL STANISLAWSKI
NEW YORK, NY

I found most interesting, though depressing, Hazony's article. On several points, however, he is mistaken.

Hazony correctly points out that initially there was widespread opposition among Jewish intellectuals to the Zionist movement. But then writes: "Hermann Cohen, Franz Rosenzweig, Martin Buber, Haim Soloveitchik, and the Hasidic rebbes of both Lubavitch and Satmar—all rejected Zionism for much the same reason: They believed the Jewish people essentially a thing of the spirit."

Haim Soloveitchik and the rebbes of Lubavitch and Satmar saw Zionism as a threat to the sacred Jewish belief system, leading ultimately to a complete rejection of all Jewish values. Hazony's piece, ironically, would seem to validate their contention.

I think it would be safe to say there was essentially *nothing* concerning which Soloveitchik and the rebbes of Lubavitch and Satmar agreed with Cohen, Rosenzweig, and Buber.

YEHUDA ROSTKER
FAR ROCKAWAY, NY

YORAM HAZONY RESPONDS: Strange as it may seem, Rosenzweig's belief in a Jewish mission to wander the world as God's powerless "suffering servant" was remarkably similar to that of the ultra-orthodox Satmar.

Both believed Zionism would replace the Jewish quest for perfect faith with a quest for worldly power—trading away God's eternal glory for "a Zionist Serbia or Bulgaria" (as Rosenzweig called the proposed Jewish state).

Buber's views were nearly identical to Rosenzweig's, except that he believed Jewish powerlessness could be fruitfully pursued not only in Germany, but in Palestine.

Holding Ben-Gurion's pursuit of Jewish power to be "demonic," Buber became a notorious opponent of the establishment of the State of Israel. In 1921, he proposed a joint Arab-Jewish "Near Eastern federation" in place of a Jewish state, and in the 1930s (and even after the Holocaust) he advocated a "binational" Palestine in which the Jews would accept the status of a minority. Both of Buber's schemes sought for Jews to live in Palestine free from having to wield Jewish power—making these ideas the real antecedents of today's "Post-Zionism."

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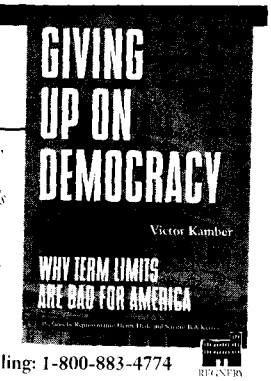

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Who benefits from Uncle Sam's debt?

Those who still believe government spending stimulates the economy are living in a world existing only in theory. At times, 40 percent of the national debt is held by non-American investors. This means we export more than $100 billion in interest expenditures that *never* stimulate the domestic economy. For example, the Japanese made more on their investments in the United States over the past decade than they did off of their trade surplus.

It's time the lies stop. It's time Congress stops promising the moon while blocking the sunlight of personal economic freedom and opportunity. Government cannot manage every aspect of our economy. Russia tried and look what happened. It's time for honesty, not exaggerated rhetoric. The people deserve more.

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the weekly Standard

Campaign Reform: Leave Bad Enough Alone

On a beautiful fall afternoon in Washington last week, camera angles framing the Capitol dome, a bipartisan group of senators and House members gathered with "citizen activists" to decry the "swamp of corrupt campaign money" now engulfing Congress and destroying democracy. The solution? An astonishing array of campaign spending and contribution limits that would grant significant new advantages to the incumbents and "public-interest" groups that propose them, while trashing the Constitution's most glorious guarantee: its absolute protection of political speech.

Have a nice day.

Populist campaign finance reform has a basic, intuitive appeal. Congressional campaigns cost "too much," or so the argument goes. The cost keeps growing. And current officeholders are better equipped than their challengers to sustain those expenses, since incumbency involves ready access to the pool of active political donors, access that upstarts don't have. So government dissolves into an endless chase after quid-pro-quo, fat-cat donations. Would-be congressional newcomers get smothered in the money crib. And up goes the battle cry: Limit spending, limit contributions, return government to "the people." It's that simple, as low-slung Texas billionaires like to say.

It really isn't that simple, though. All told, candidates in general elections spent about $600 million in the two-year congressional campaign cycle that ended last fall. It was a new spending record, and it sounds like a lot. But if you bother to do the math, you see that it wasn't. That $600 million is roughly $1.50 a year spent per eligible voter. The hard truth is, as George F. Will wryly points out, that every 12 months Americans spend less than half as much on politics as on yogurt.

And the even harder truth is that a primary reason why politicians are so obsessed with our yogurt money—and why it works so much in favor of incumbents—is campaign finance reform. No, not the missing "serious and necessary reform" that Congress has so far resisted. The problem is the milder versions of that reform that Congress has *already enacted*.

The current campaign finance system dates from 1974. That year, Congress limited individual contributions to $1,000 for any candidate in any election; placed hard ceilings on various congressional campaign expenditures; and established matching funds and tax-dollar financing for major party presidential candidates who agreed to observe spending limits. All the mandatory spending limits in this package were revoked by the Supreme Court's 1976 *Buckley* decision, which correctly judged them to be "substantial and direct restrictions on the ability of candidates, citizens and associations to engage in protected political expression, restrictions that the First Amendment cannot tolerate."

But the court upheld the *voluntary* spending limits embodied in Congress's presidential campaign financing scheme. This ruling meant, in essence, that federal law may "encourage" candidates for the nation's top job to trade their First Amendment freedoms for cash—a linkage of fundamental rights and funding that would never be allowed for, say, performance artists and family planning counselors. And the court also upheld individual contribution limits to all federal candidates; the state, the justices concluded, had a compelling interest in preventing the "appearance of corruption."

Incumbents have been in pretty good shape ever since, and the "good-government" goals of campaign reform have taken a brutal, ironic punch in the nose. Contribution limits do not "level the playing field" for incumbents and challengers. They help incumbents, a lot, since current officeholders don't *need* quite so much cash to begin with. They already have the name recognition that expensive advertising campaigns are designed to purchase, and their ongoing official activities constitute a permanent—free—media campaign in any case. What contributions incumbents do need must come from a large number of small donors; 1974's $1,000 limit has never been indexed for inflation. But that's not much trouble, either. It is incumbents, after all, not challengers, who have intact cam-

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paign organizations and updated direct-mail and telephone lists. So challengers must begin their fundraising very early, which produces the interminable campaign seasons everybody claims to hate.

It's a grubby business, to be sure. But it's nothing that couldn't be made vastly *worse* by more and stricter such "reform."

The "reformist" call traditionally comes loudest from the majority party in Congress, for the simple reason that "reform" actually benefits incumbents, and the majority has more incumbents to protect. Now that Republicans are the majority, a jaundiced observer might almost *expect* some of them to show fresh new interest in the subject, which most people in the GOP previously ignored—or actively scorned. For whatever reason, it's happening. And it's disappointing.

John McCain of Arizona is working with Democrat Russ Feingold of Wisconsin on a Senate bill that would set "voluntary" Senate campaign spending limits. In return, the measure would give candidates who agree to comply a wide range of media discounts, spending allowances, and other goodies, including thinly disguised penalties against any opponent who declines the bill's inducements. Reps. Linda Smith and Chris Shays have joined Democrat Martin Meehan on a similar, even more "reform-minded" House measure. They threaten a publicly embarrassing procedural challenge if the House leadership fails to promise a floor vote by February.

These initiatives are probably just the result of ill-considered good intentions. But they're still terrible.

The only spending limits the Supreme Court has ever allowed are "voluntary" limits purchased with federal funding. But taxpayer financing of federal elections is unpopular. So this year's reformers offer substitute compensations to participating candidates—each of which may well be unconstitutional. Campaigns that limit their expenditures would get a 50 percent discount on radio and television ad purchases. It's a harshly punitive strike against opposing campaigns that may refuse these "voluntary" terms; their air time—their speech rights, in other words—suddenly cost twice as much. The reduced postage rates also contemplated would work much the same way.

Both bills ban PAC contributions, which is almost *certainly* unconstitutional. The House measure effectively penalizes fundraising in increments over $250—on grounds that "millionaire donors" enjoy excessive influence. It goes on to limit individual contributions by lobbyists to just $100. It prohibits out-of-state contributions. And once it's finished dining on the First Amendment this way, it eats the Tenth for dessert—by applying the full arsenal of federal campaign regulations to state party activities, including voter registration drives and get-out-the-vote efforts.

Advocacy groups like Common Cause and Public Citizen, who make their presence felt in politics not so much with cash, but with time, effort, and litigation, love this sort of thing. It leaves them entirely alone. But most Americans do not live in Washington and hold press conferences. They limit their political participation, beyond voting, to occasional campaign contributions. They are not "buying" the votes of their fellow citizens with those contributions. The money produces votes only after it is transformed into campaign spending—constitutionally protected political expression. When you limit donations and spending, you limit speech. It shouldn't happen any more than it has already.

This is a complicated, difficult argument to make in a country that doesn't much care for other people's money, and cares for politicians even less. And the argument for *real* campaign finance reform—for *looser* limits and greater disclosure of fundraising activity—is even harder, and maybe impossible. The populist impulse favors campaign restrictions, which is why Speaker Gingrich earlier this year in New Hampshire was tempted carelessly to shake hands with President Clinton on the question. The "anti-reform" effort has precious few courageous defenders in Congress, like Sen. Mitch McConnell of Kentucky.

But they're right. Hope the Republican leadership finds sufficient strength to crush these bills.

—David Tell, for the Editors

THAT CRAZY SWITCHCRAFT

by Christopher Caldwell

THIS MESSAGE BROUGHT TO YOU by the Republican National Committee: Two months ago, Mike Foster was an obscure Democrat in the Louisiana State Senate. In September, he switched parties. Last week he won his state's non-partisan gubernatorial primary and is considered a shoo-in when Louisianans cast their votes in November's general election. Foster won handily among Republicans and independents and came within 4 percentage points of winning a plurality of the registered Democrats he'd just abandoned.

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This message brought to you by the Republican Congressional Campaign Committee: In the first months of the 104th Congress, three Democrats in the House—Greg Laughlin of Texas, Billy Tauzin of Louisiana, and Nathan Deal of Georgia—joined the Republican majority. Mississippi Democrat Mike Parker makes no bones that he's the next to cross over: "It's only a matter of time," he says. Parker is waiting out November's state elections in Mississippi. "The Democratic party structure has disintegrated in Mississippi," says Parker chief of staff Arthur Rhodes. "The party label hurts, not helps, and a lot of good local candidates are running as Mike Parker Democrats." Once Parker switches, Rhodes says, "you can expect between 5 and 50 Democrats at the state and county level in Mississippi to switch parties."

Sean Delonas

Democrats, especially those in the South, are defecting to the Republican party in unprecedented numbers. Now the question is, who might be next? Most of the recent poaching talk has focused on the 23 members (Parker's one) of the Blue Dog Coalition, an informal caucus that meets for coffee and doughnuts every Wednesday morning at 8:30 in the office of California Democrat Gary Condit. "There's a lot of frustration with the direction and leadership of the party, with its control by liberals," Condit says. "I've been approached by *both* sides wanting me to switch. But there's been no formal invite from the Republicans, and switching is not my priority, not my intention."

Condit and fellow prospect Pete Geren of Texas are a good measure of how far American politics has shifted. Condit, the most conservative of the California Democrats, represents one-time House bigwig Tony Coelho's district and thinks Republicans could win there. ("The middle 40 or 50 percent are independent voters and can swing any election.") "Condit is a Democrat and wants to be," says a senior GOP staffer. "But he's concerned—we've got a good candidate we're going to send against him." Others have switched with similar motivations: Greg Laughlin was going to face a tough race against '94 Republican foe Jim Deats. Democrats threatened to allow a primary challenge to Nathan Deal next year, while Republicans pondered running ex-senator Mack Mattingly against him.

Geren, a Lone Star veteran of Lloyd Bentsen's organization, voted aye on 13 of the 15 Contract with America measures. His district—where Jim Wright ruled for 34 years—has grown steadily more conservative. Geren's staff says it's "100 percent certain" he'll still be a Democrat after the January 4 Texas filing deadline, but a switcher's staffer says Geren met weeks ago in Fort Worth with his finance director and other advisers to discuss the viability of crossing over. Another puts Geren at "more than 50 percent to switch."

Ralph Hall of Texas, whom many assumed more likely to retire than switch (like fellow Texas Dem Charlie Wilson), has lately come to the top of the switch list. Ohio Rep. John Boehner, chairman of the House Republican Conference, is the point man for the Hall recruitment effort. "There's not a formal mating ritual," says a source close to Boehner. But "over the years, they've developed a pretty good relationship."

Foster's stunning win in the Louisiana governor's race shook up Louisiana's Jimmy Hayes (also 13 of 15 on the Contract). He had to choose between Foster and fellow Rep. Cleo Fields; his staff did some research and discovered that Hayes and Fields vote the same way 3 percent of the time. He chose Foster. "I would have equal ease in switching parties," he says, while adding that he has "no immediate plans." Hayes *has* fed speculation that he might run as an independent or third-party candidate. Despite the coyness, Hayes has had serious conversations with Tauzin about switching.

Bill Brewster of Oklahoma, now the lone Democrat in what was previously a solidly Democratic state, is a little less likely to switch. He has a long Democrat-

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ic pedigree and may find the decision more gut-wrenching. "He's like Geren," says one newly minted Republican. "He'd like to switch, but he's looking for a way to do it."

Collin Peterson of Minnesota is also sympathetic, but can't come across. The consensus among switchers is that he would have a more difficult time in his liberal state than the Southerners have; they are merely swearing allegiance to a flag they have been saluting for a while.

A top congressional staffer says that Jim Traficant of Ohio—who is not, incidentally, a Coalition member—met with emissaries of the GOP leadership with the speaker's blessing. Traficant balked at their invitation, saying he would be more interested in running as an independent. Traficant says the meetings concerned one of his favorite good-government measures, a "burden-of-proof provision to curb IRS abuses." It doesn't matter: He's no fonder of the Republicans than of the Democrats.

Same for Mississippi's Gene Taylor. He, too, has talked about the independent route. Ideologically, there's little separating Taylor from Hayes or Parker, but he has made attacks on Republicans a campaign staple and has become an outright enemy of fellow Mississippian Sen. Trent Lott in the process. "Gene is not going to switch," says a close Taylor friend. "He'd feel he was being welcomed by Trent, and he doesn't want that."

All the Democrats in the Coalition have been approached by individual Republicans, but the time of concerted leadership efforts to win converts through the promise of committee seats—Laughlin, for example, got Ways and Means—has passed. (Parker, described as "practically family," has been assured royal treatment.) "It was a conscious decision, approved by the RNC and Newt, to drive the number of Democrats below 200," says a leadership staffer. "Once that happened, an important psychological barrier would be breached. And Gephardt would find it harder to run roughshod with threats of what would happen when they got the House back."

Now that Illinois Rep. Mel Reynolds has been jailed for statutory rape, the Democratic number is down to 199, and aggressive recruitment by Republicans is over. Democratic enlistment, however, is not. ♦

The Vendetta Machine

by Carl M. Cannon

No equestrian statue of James H. Lake will ever adorn a city square. He is a Washington lobbyist, not a war hero. Still, now that Lake has fallen into the hellish clutches of a special prosecutor, here's an idea for how his fellow Republicans could honor his long service to Ronald Reagan and their party: They could end or at least sharply curtail the special prosecutor system.

This monument to Lake will be controversial. Some will object that a Special Prosecutor Repeal Act should be dedicated to those who really inspired it: the independent counsels themselves, with their messianic complexes, their multi-million-dollar spending jags, and their years-long vendettas. Men like Iran-Contra counsel Lawrence Walsh. Or the latest nominee, Jim Lake's buddy, Donald C. Smaltz. Others will favor the victims but ask, why Lake? Why not Mike Deaver? Or Ted Olson? Or Webb Hubbell? Or Margaret Tutwiler? Or Jim Guy Tucker? Or Elliott Abrams? A strong contender will be Elliott's wife, Rachel Abrams, who voiced the bitterness that all those caught up in the special prosecutor system seem to share.

"I know something about Bill and Hillary Clinton right now," she wrote, after a passel of special prosecutors were sicced on the Clintonites. "I know how their stomachs churn, their anxiety mounts, how their worry over the defenseless child increases. I know their inability to sleep at night and their reluctance to rise in the morning. I know every new incursion of doubt, every heartbreak over bailing out friends . . . every jaw-clenching look at front pages. I know all this, and the thought of it makes me happy."

Rachel's husband could be arrogant and unbending, but those are not crimes. His real sin was that he helped run a policy in Central America that the Democrats hated. Not content to tangle with Elliott Abrams solely in the political arena, the Democrats followed a strategy all too common in the 1980s: They agitated for the Iran-Contra prosecutor to investigate him. Ultimately, Abrams was adjudged to have given less than complete answers to a hostile congressional committee. A liberal Democratic lawyer in the special prosecutor's office admitted to a grudge against Abrams; in any case, Walsh ended up with Abrams's scalp, in the form of two misdemeanor pleas. The process took five years and cost Abrams hundreds of thousands in legal fees, so his wife's outburst is understandable.

Others actually suffered ordeals even more

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Kafkaesque, as it became the fashion to try to criminalize policy differences between the parties. Theodore B. Olson incurred the wrath of Capitol Hill Democrats by formulating the Reagan administration's policy regarding release of Environmental Protection Agency documents to congressional committees. When Judiciary Committee Chairman Peter Rodino didn't like the regulations, he called for a perjury investigation of Olson. After a six-year inquiry, the special counsel announced almost reluctantly that she couldn't charge Olson with a crime because he'd told the truth.

The special prosecutor law was enacted in 1978 as a belated response to Richard Nixon's firing of an independent counsel looking into Watergate. The law was amended in 1983 and 1987; it expired but was passed again in 1993, and President Clinton signed it back into law.

Its laudable aim was to shield investigations of high officials from potential political interference. The rap against the law has always been that there seem to be no limitations on a special prosecutor. He reports to no one, has an unlimited budget, doesn't have to stand for re-election. Conservative scholars such as Terry Eastland have questioned its constitutionality. The Supreme Court has been unwilling to throw it out, however. So special prosecutors remain free to engage in virtually unrestrained fishing expeditions, and no one answers the haunting question asked by acquitted former Labor secretary Raymond Donovan, "Which office do I go to to get my reputation back?"

In practice, what is strangest about the law is the capriciousness with which investigations expand to net particular individuals. Clinton confidant Webb Hubbell overbilled clients down in Arkansas and didn't report all his taxes. Not great conduct, to be sure, but what exactly does it have to do with the alleged misuse of federally insured funds that Whitewater is supposedly about? And even if the allegations against Arkansas governor Jim Guy Tucker are true, they came to light only because his predecessor was elected president and an independent counsel was dispatched to dredge the swamp of home-state graft.

For his part, counsel Donald Smaltz was supposed to be looking into the relationship between Clinton's first agriculture secretary, Mike Espy, and Tyson Foods, Inc., the poultry behemoth based in Springdale, Ark. So how did he come to nab Beltway Reaganite Jim Lake? It appears that one of Lake's California agribusiness clients wanted to curry favor with the Department of Agriculture by funneling $5,000 to retire the campaign debt of Mike Espy's brother, and Lake was willing to fudge the paperwork. Smaltz pumped up this misdemeanor into a felony using a dubious device increasingly favored by federal prosecutors (they tried it on Al D'Amato's brother): the all-purpose wire-fraud statute. Another nagging question about Lake's case is why, after he himself pointed out the transgression to Smaltz and received immunity for it, he was forced to plead guilty when Smaltz announced, 10 months later, that he was going after Lake's firm. Was this fair? The question was put to Smaltz last week; himself immune to oversight, he felt free to decline any comment.

The larger question remains why an unfettered special prosecutor system still exists. It has been almost a year since the Republicans took over Congress and they've wanted to put a leash on these guys for a long time. What they will tell you is that their determination to rid the Republic of this scourge was lost somewhere between Newt Gingrich's book deal, David Bonior's braying about GOPAC, and Ross Perot's contrived crusade to clean up politics. The truth is that they were enjoying entirely too much seeing the Clintonites squirm as a result of the appointment of a record number of special prosecutors.

Margaret Tutwiler, who was put through the wringer on the apparently bogus charge that she rummaged into Clinton's passport file while serving the Bush administration, found this attitude shortsighted. She recounted running into then-White House communications director Mark Gearan at Logan Airport one day and buying him a drink at a time when Gearan was depressed over his own grand jury appearance and mounting legal bills courtesy of the Whitewater special prosecutor.

"Mark's 'crime' was showing up for 10 minutes at a meeting," she said scornfully. "For the future of our country, we have to find a way to keep these partisan fights out of the criminal justice system."

Well, Republicans, the occupant of the White House feels your pain on this one. He may have signed the updated special prosecutor law, but he has all but said he regrets it. He particularly dislikes the fact that the new bill makes the threshold so low for appointment of a prosecutor. Maybe this is the time to call a truce and pass a new scaled-down law under which political corruption could be probed by an independent counsel who reported to the attorney general and who had some constraints on his mandate. While they're at it, congressional leaders may want to consider narrowing the legal definition of wire fraud and perhaps tighten the much-abused RICO racketeering statute as well.

Last year, before Donald Smaltz was even sworn in as a special prosecutor, I interviewed a well-connected Republican on this subject. He thought it unseemly and ultimately self-defeating for Republicans to rejoice in Clinton's agony.

"It's an outrage," he told me. "The Republicans are

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stupid for caving in on this. They saw a chance for it to tie up Clinton, and they wink at the abuses."

This Republican never worked in the White House, though he was asked to. I asked him why. One factor, he said, was that he'd seen friends ruined and tormented by special prosecutors. "The reason I turned down Reagan and Bush four times was that I like my business," he told me. "I like my freedom."

But that was then. His name is Jim Lake.

Carl M. Cannon is the White House correspondent for the Baltimore Sun.

A New GOP Dominion?

by Sandy Hume

Warrenton, Virginia

Even in dignified Virginia, it's the glitter races that get the attention and the money. In Charlottesville, Democrat Emily Couric, in an uphill fight against GOP state senator Edgar Robb, had fundraising help from sister Katie of *Today* show fame. And near Mt. Vernon in the Washington suburbs, Republican Sandra Liddy Bourne, daughter of Watergate trickster and talk show host G. Gordon Liddy, may unseat another celebrity relative: Democratic delegate Toddy Puller, widow of Pulitzer-prize winning author Lewis Puller. The press is treating both contests as major events.

But the folks with the most at stake in the Virginia legislative elections on November 7 are U.S. House Speaker Newt Gingrich and Governor George Allen. They've made Virginia a test of the GOP realignment.

Virginia Republicans have duplicated Gingrich's strategy of coordinating campaigns statewide around a few conservative themes: tax cuts, spending cuts, prison funding. They have their own version of the Contract with America, the Pledge for Honest Change. Also, for the first time in Virginia, the Republican party has matched the Democrats in fundraising and is airing statewide TV spots linking opponents to unpopular Democrats like President Clinton and Senator Teddy Kennedy.

Sean Delonas

George Allen

As a result, Viriginia may become the first southern state since Reconstruction where Republicans control both houses of the legislature. (In Virginia they hold the governorship, too.) Republicans need only three seats in the Senate and four in the House, well within the range of GOP gains in recent years.

"Expectations have risen so high that it's almost going to be disappointing if we don't take at least one if not two houses," says Scott Leake, executive director of the GOP legislative caucus. "We're looking to make a breakthrough, but if we don't, Democrats will say that the Republican agenda has stalled."

Republicans already hold a majority of U.S. House and Senate seats and governorships in the South. In the past year alone, they've picked up one legislative chamber in North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Tennessee. A Virginia sweep would nicely further the trend.

It would also vindicate Allen and his political model, Gingrich. Allen served two House terms with Gingrich and now is one of the speaker's most ardent supporters among the governors. He has fervently backed GOP initiatives in Congress to turn federal programs over to the states.

It was Allen's ungentlemanly clash with Democrats in the General Assembly last winter that set the stage for this fall's campaign. Democrats had scarcely challenged Allen in 1994, when his popularity approached 70 percent and the memory of his landslide election was fresh. But they pounced in 1995, when Allen's poll rating tumbled to 50 percent.

Indeed, the 1995 session began with Democrats breaking tradition by refusing to let Allen deliver his State of the Commonwealth address before the legislature. The governor was forced to give the speech in his office to television cameras.

The session quickly degenerated into Richmond's ugliest partisan showdown ever. With the help of heav-

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ily disproportionate committee representation, Democrats repeatedly killed GOP bills before they reached the floor. Allen's proposals to cut taxes and spending, to sell bonds for new prisons, even to require the pledge of allegiance in schools and parental notification of minors' abortions, all died. The only significant legislation to survive was a modified version of Allen's welfare reform.

The governor's failed program, so similar to Gingrich's, became the Republican campaign agenda. The Democrats, meanwhile, proclaimed themselves the saviors of sacred institutions, like public schools and universities, in grave peril from Allen's proposed cuts.

The alleged magnitude of these reductions varies, depending on which Democrat is launching the attack. Candidates who drove a school bus around the state to promote their "Good Schools=Good Jobs" plan denounced cuts of $92 million. The Joint Democratic Caucus upped the ante, charging Allen with an "assault on education" worth at least $1.1 billion. This figure reflects Allen's proposal to give lottery funds to localities to spend on whatever they want, not just on schools.

Should the education pitch succeed, averting further Republican inroads or even producing Democratic gains, it would reverse a two-decade trend of rising GOP strength in Virginia. In 1970, Republicans held 7 of 40 Senate seats and 25 of 100 House seats; today they have 18 and 47 respectively.

What is new this year is the prospect that the GOP will knock off Allen's chief Democratic antagonist, Senate majority leader Hunter Andrews. His district altered by racial gerrymandering, Andrews is trailing Republican Marty Williams. House majority leader Richard Cranwell also faces a stiff challenge in a district Allen carried with 63 percent in 1993.

Polls give neither party a distinct advantage. But the Republicans are more confident. All they need to secure control, they think, is to win in Republican-leaning districts.

Their enthusiasm has spilled over into local races. A few weeks ago GOP candidates for board of supervisors in Fauquier County, an hour west of Washington, appeared together on the steps of the courthouse. They unfurled a spray-painted banner that read: "Republican Contract with Fauquier County."

Sandy Hume is a government reporter for the** Fauquier Times-Democrat **in Warrenton.

MESHUGGE IN MISSISSIPPI

by Sid Scott

THE SAD THING ABOUT THE ELECTION on November 7 is that Mississippi voters won't get to hear any more titillating campaign rhetoric. Kirk Fordice, the first Republican governor of Mississippi since Reconstruction, and his Democratic rival, Secretary of State Dick Molpus, have recently eschewed the drab dialogue of the campaign's early days and started playing politics the old-fashioned way—they've gotten nasty.

Fordice, in an interview, called Molpus a "pissant politician," and Molpus recently threatened to take Fordice "to the woodshed." A mid-summer debate at Mississippi's legendary Neshoba County Fair saw the men glowering at each other in the July heat, just an insult away from eye-gouging. Then, seconds after a statewide televised debate had concluded last week, Fordice got in Molpus's face and confronted him about the woodshed comment. "This 61-year-old man will take you to the woodshed and I'll whip your ass."

Though the race has grown tighter—Fordice began with a 20 point lead, but an Oct. 15 poll by the Molpus organization shows the candidates just eight points apart—Fordice remains the favorite. Voters seem to appreciate his uncommon frankness even though it can be grating (a supporter once likened it to sandpaper). He can be an inveterate braggart, speaking often of the "Mississippi Miracle" ushered in by his administration, but he can also be disarmingly modest. His achievements, he has said, don't amount to much "on paper." What he has accomplished, he says, "I've accomplished in the realm of ideas." That's important, though, because in a weak-governor state dominated by Democrats, a Republican governor's legislative reach is limited. Fordice's greatest contribution to Mississippi politics may be not his education initiative, or his plan to give churches and charities a larger role in welfare, but his part in persuading the electorate that it is permissible to vote Republican on the state and local levels.

Every office from coroner to lieutenant governor is up for grabs on November 7, including the all-powerful Legislature, and this means that Fordice's success can be judged to a great extent by Republicans' performance statewide. While a GOP takeover of the Legislature remains unlikely, gains of some sort are certain.

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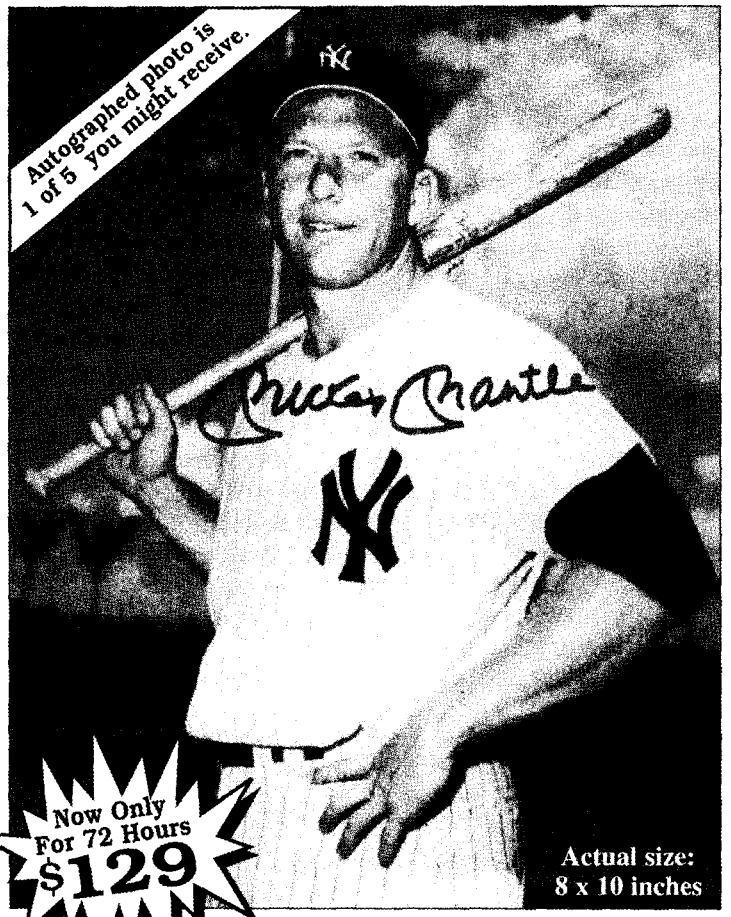

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According to Republican state chairman Billy Powell, "The philosophy in Mississippi mirrors the Republican party more than the Democratic party today. Candidates are switching parties and so are voters." Powell notes that in 1991, about 5,000 people voted Republican in the primaries in Hancock County, one of the state's most populous. This year, that number tripled.

The Republicans need 29 wins with no setbacks to gain control of the House, but a net gain of just nine seats would give them the Senate. Powell calls this coup a "great possibility." U.S. Senate majority whip Trent Lott puts the odds at 50-50.

Powell's Democratic counterpart, Alice Skelton, remains skeptical of a Republican takeover, but she cites mainly logistical concerns—a dearth of candidates—not any unwillingness of Mississippians to vote Republican. Skelton also mentions what has long been a truism in Mississippi politics: Voters don't look to national trends to decide who their local representatives will be. What Bill Clinton and Newt Gingrich say and do does not affect local and state races.

Fordice may be changing that, by effectively exploiting the national Republican message. "People are starting to associate what's said in Washington with what's happening on the state level," Powell insists. There's no question that old patterns are breaking down. Candidates for sheriff and for county supervisor are running as Republicans, which would have been unthinkable a decade ago. Mississippi was conservative even in its yellow-dog Democrat days, but voting Republican was simply taboo.

Not all Republicans are thrilled with Fordice, however. Some conservatives see him as being too abrasive to champion the cause effectively over the long run. Jack Reed, Jr., for example, whose father ran for governor as a Republican against New Democrat Ray Mabus in 1987, co-hosted a fundraiser for Molpus earlier this year. To Fordice's detractors, the Republican message is right but the messenger is wrong.

Perhaps the only Republican who isn't benefiting from the new momentum is Lieutenant Governor Eddie Briggs. Briggs and Fordice can't stand each other, which causes a Republican opportunity to go to waste. Given the structure of Mississippi's government—the lieutenant governor presides over the Senate and has a tie-breaking vote—if Fordice and Briggs worked together, they could certainly affect legislative results.

And Briggs's troubles don't stop with the fact that the state's most popular politician won't support him. He also has the distinct misfortune of running against Democrat Ronnie Musgrove, whose most conspicuous promoter is the novelist John Grisham, Mississippi's favorite son. If Mississippians are just now learning to warm to Republicans, they've never been unsure about Grisham. Several years ago Democrats even dreamed of getting him to run against Trent Lott.

Whatever the outcome of the lieutenant governor's race, Fordice believes he is leading a growing Republican charge. He claims to be a Reagan Republican, and his Mississippi partisans are betting that his coattails will be almost as long as the Gipper's in 1980.

Sid Scott is a freelance writer in Jackson, Miss.

WHAT CONFUCIUS SAID

by Charles Horner

THE RHETORICAL OUTBURSTS in Beijing at the United Nations women's conference, directed against the Chinese government and answered by the Chinese regime in kind, are only the most recent exchange in a long-running argument between West and East. Whose standards about individual liberty and the sway of the state—ours or theirs—are to be afforded pride of place in the world? Newly rich and increasingly courted, some of the Asian "tigers" have spent the past few years talking back to their Western critics; they have also taken to questioning the very legitimacy of those criticisms—categorizing them as merely Western ideas applicable only to the West.

But what about the applicability of *their* ideas to *their* practices? Western conservatives have been quick to praise the "Confucian ethic" as an analogue of our own ethic of self-restraint and moral concern, and have seen the success of East Asians, both at home and in the United States, as a vindication of those "traditional values." But some political leaders in the Confucian part of the world have just as quickly gone us one better, taking the West's admiration for Confucian personal traits and attempting to graft onto it their justifications for arbitrary government.

In this, they reveal ignorance of Confucianism's vast and varied teachings. Besides, they are probably confident that they can continue to use the idea of distinctive Confucian/Asian values to counter criticism of their behavior, because we ourselves will not do the work required to learn about the tradition but will,

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instead, continue to rely on their misinformation.

But, at best, that will hold only for the short term. In China itself—where, after all, Confucianism got started and whence its influence spread to Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and beyond—people are discovering that the argument over the role and conduct of government, the proper dividing line between public and private, and the boundary between state and society can, in large measure, be carried on within their own tradition. Their own thinkers have had much to say on these subjects; they have made arguments which are reminiscent of the arguments that we in the West have carried on among ourselves. This reliance on their own traditions will come about, more or less, by a process of elimination, as the various Western schools of thought—Communism, principally—on which the Chinese have relied for an examination of these questions fall by the wayside.

Sean Delonas

In fact, without having to rely all that much on Western liberal thought, or Western religious-based political ideas like natural law, Chinese who seek to argue against the excesses of their government can indeed find much in their own history to help them out. Confucius (551-479 B.C.) left only the sketchiest outlines of his own thought in the form of pronouncements written down by his disciples. And, like other great teachers, he passed on a legacy embracing a multitude of sins. As for Confucius himself, we might think of him as a moral authoritarian, but not necessarily a political one in the sense we use the term today. Indeed, he mused that the presence of harsh laws and severe punishments is a sign that a state is in bad shape, not good. High taxes, large armies, conscripted labor, and vainglorious aggrandizement were not good signs either. Indeed, the men in charge were supposed to edify and not intimidate. If they had a claim to rule, it was only that they were better people, not more ruthless ones.

Over the centuries, these ideas influenced both personal and institutional codes of conduct. The proper mandarin was obliged—as we would put it—to tell truth to power, often paying with his head. Each new dynasty was obliged to write a long, detailed, multivolume history of the dynasty it superseded. Invariably, the account of every dynasty's downfall confirms established principles. Each of these great works is a cautionary tale about the need for rectitude and restraint, about the threat of profligacy and decadence, about the fate of a state which overreaches itself. These themes reverberated in both high and popular culture and helped create the beau ideal of the official as scholar, moralist, poet, and artist. None of them ever believes in capital punishment.

Now, the Chinese, as we know, were inventors of the state, and when their state was working, it worked powerfully. In modern times especially, when the country was beset by foreign enemies, the need for a strong state was unquestioned by Chinese, whatever their political affiliation. But now, with a worldwide trend against the growth of state power, fuelled in part by the (temporary?) collapse of great-power rivalry, it is hard to see the Chinese state as the solitary manifestation of a countertrend. Indeed, by every measure, it has become weaker these past several years, as it has swallowed a stiff dose of capitalism's creative destruction.

But for the Chinese, there is nothing startling here. Consider one set of examples. Back in the 13th century, when an extraordinary economic boom was creating unprecedented new wealth (this is the same country whose wealth astounded Marco Polo when he visited it in the late 1200s, let us remember), there was careful consideration of the longer-term meaning of this efflorescence. In the preceding century, a host of foreign and domestic problems had provoked thoroughgoing debate about an appropriate government response. On one side were advocates of enlarging the government's role in the economy, setting up the gov-

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ernment in competition with private merchants and traders, and, in general, refilling the emperor's coffers by more astute fiscal and administrative interventions. On the other side were scholar/officials, known even then as "the Conservatives," who argued that the bureaucracy was already bloated, that government interventions sopped up wealth and did not create it, and that, in any event, reliance on the enlargement of government rather than on the cultivation of individuals would prove destructive. Should the poor be made dependent on the state, the better to control them, or should they be encouraged to become independent of the state, more reliant on their own efforts and on the efforts of local notables?

The Conservatives did not fare at all well at the beginning of this debate. But, as some students of Chinese history have recently come to argue, the debates of those times established an outer boundary for governmental intervention, a boundary which later dynasties were reluctant to cross. There was also set in motion a spirited habit of individual charitable and educational initiatives that continued across the centuries.

This is not in keeping with the image of "oriental despotism," as developed for us by European philosophers. It certainly does not track with our experience of Chinese totalitarianism, post-1949. But, on the other hand, it surely reminds us that China's powerful strand of traditional thought—Confucian values, if you like—is no impenetrable smokescreen, and that Confucian values are not, in and of themselves, an excuse for high-handed authoritarianism or denial of social and political rights.

Not so long ago, it was obligatory to distinguish between the traditional and the modern in those parts of the world coming to grips with the onslaught of the West. Throughout most of our century, the argument for the centralization of national power in the state seemed almost self-evident, as the world lived through world wars and a cold war. But that argument seems less relevant now, when the trinity of entrepreneurial expansion, technological advance, and post power-bloc politics is grinding down "big government" everywhere.

As this happens, we have rediscovered our own older thoughts about "civil society." We should surely marshal them against regimes in the world that still refuse to accord human beings their proper due. But we will make as much progress by encouraging them to enter into an argument with their own inherited wisdom, even as we continue polemical exchanges with them about ours.

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FUN IN FLORIDA: No, it's not too early to talk 1998. So get this: Florida Democratic Sen. Bob Graham hates the Senate (and what rational person wouldn't?). He was happier being governor, a job that conveniently comes open in '98 because sitting Gov. Lawton Chiles can't run again. One problem for Graham: Lieutenant Gov. Buddy McKay, who presumably wants to be top dog in Tallahassee. So here's one scenario being bandied about by Floridians: Come 1997, Graham resigns his seat in the Senate. Chiles appoints McKay to take Graham's seat. Graham runs basically unopposed in the Florida primary. It might not matter all that much anyway; Florida is rushing so quickly into the Republican camp that neither Graham nor McKay might win—in either race, for either job.

♦

THE ENGELBERT HUMPERDINCK CHAIR IN HERMENEUTICS: Unfortunately, unlike old soldiers, aging lounge singers don't just fade away; sometimes they meddle in academia. The latest evidence comes from Los Angeles, where the University of Southern California has just announced the creation of the Streisand Professorship of Contemporary Gender Studies. Sure, it may be simply another attempt by a pillow-headed entertainer to buy undeserved legitimacy, but there is good news—the position has not yet been filled. If you're a "distinguished senior scholar" fluent in "issues such as sexuality, the family, the nature of power in relationships, etc.," this could be the job for you. Give it a shot.

Applicants, according to an ad in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, should "submit letter of interest, C.V., and list of references to Dean Nancy Vickers, Co-chair of Streisand Professorship Search Committee, ADM 304, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA 90089-4012." The post-literate can call her at: (213) 740-6104.

♦

THE READING LIST: With Colin Powell's book still topping the non-fiction charts, all those who are buying it and not even opening it might consider these genuinely great works of non-fiction by generals past:

The Peloponnesian War, by Thucydides. Arguably the most important book ever written by a military man, *The Peloponnesian War* is the account of the conflict between Athens and Sparta that marked the end of the greatest experiment in democracy until our nation's founding. Thucydides began another military tradition in the book's first line by referring to himself in the third person.

The Gallic Wars, by Julius Caesar. We're not sure it's

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Scrapbook

literature, but we learned Latin by it and chances are our grandchildren will too.

Memoirs, by Ulysses S. Grant. One of the country's worst presidents wrote what is certainly the greatest presidential memoir, one of the few books that really capture life in 19th-century America.

♦

WHO'S SPOOKING WHOM? The Clintonites have been accusing House Republicans of posing a threat to the very fate of the world itself, should the Gingrichites demonstrate their seriousness about getting the budget they want by tying it to the "debt limit"—that is, the amount of money the federal government can borrow to pay back some of the interest on the money it has already borrowed. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, for one, is deeply concerned about the possibility of panic gripping the markets. Happily, the markets don't appear to be panicking. So why does he sound as though he really, really wants some panic to break out? Consider his rhetoric:

Oct. 25: "Those people are basically trying to undermine the democratic process by threatening to default on the federal debt." *Eeeek!*

Oct. 17: "This is no way for a great nation to conduct its financial affairs." *Watch out!*

Oct. 12: "When you come to the end, you are talking about defaulting on the full faith and credit of the United States for the first time in the history of this country." *Alexander Hamilton is rolling in his grave!*

We've heard of carrying water for a president, but this is ridiculous. The debt-limit gambit is to force Clinton to behave in a responsible manner on budgetary matters, something his Treasury secretary really ought to support.

♦

BORING FROM WITHIN: With the 50th anniversary of the U.N. now happily over, we offer the following One-Worlder pop quiz: See if you can match the former U.N. secretary-general with his memoir.

1) Tryvge Lie:	a) *In the Cause of Peace*
2) U Thant	b) *A View from the U.N.*
3) Kurt Waldheim	c) *In the Eye of the Storm*

Answers below. A special prize goes to those who have actually read all three books for pleasure.

♦

MORE ON BLOODSUCKING LEECHES: On October 12, editors at the *Columbia Daily Spectator*, one of the nation's oldest and most fabled college newspapers, ran Sharod Baker's fortnightly "Blackdafide" column. Baker, current president of the Columbia Black Students Union, has a beef against Jewish "tricksters." There is "evilness" hidden "under the skirts and costumes of the Rabbi," he writes. "Lift up the yarmulke" and you find "the blood of billions of Africans." Jews are "always on our backs like leeches sucking the blood from the black community."

Okay, so Baker is a repulsive creep. No big deal. But how come it took the *New York Times* two full weeks to notice this stinkbomb in the *Spectator*, which has been graduating top editorial talent to the paper of record for more than 100 years? Five long days after being scooped on this story by the weekly *Forward*, the *Times* finally bundled *Spectator*-gate into a broader "trend story" on student racial tensions nationwide. "Racial division has become increasingly institutionalized," the *Times* noted.

That's not the story. The story is that the editors of a leading American college newspaper don't have sufficient sense and courage to spike a gutter-level rant by a black activist. And that the *Times* is prepared to let those editors brag, uncontradicted, about how "excited" they are to "discuss the issues." Max Frankel, *Spectator* alum, class of 1952, call your former office.

♦

Answers: 1a, 2b, 3c

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The Resilience of Bob Dole

By Fred Barnes

How badly has Bob Dole been doing recently? He abandoned most of his prepared text and winged it at the convention of Ross Perot's United We Stand party in Dallas—and bombed badly. Later, in Indianapolis, the Tele-Prompter broke as he spoke and Dole struggled through a speech endorsing English as America's official language. In New Hampshire, he awkwardly read 3x5 cards while delivering his opening and closing statements in a nationally televised debate, prompting criticism even from talk radio yapper Don Imus, a Dole enthusiast. Also, Dole boldly asserted his credentials as a tax cutter in a letter to Steve Forbes, the magazine publisher and now a presidential campaign opponent, only to have Forbes slap him down by recounting his record of backing tax hikes.

That's just for starters. In an important Iowa straw poll, Dole had to settle for an ignominious tie with a Republican rival he loathes, Phil Gramm. He sent back a $1,000 contribution from Log Cabin Republicans, a gay group, then changed his mind and declared that returning the check had been a "mistake." For this, the media dubbed him a flip-flopper of Clintonesque proportions. Dole found himself on the bad side of Ariana Huffington, the voluble GOP culture czarina, though he'd vigorously supported her husband's Senate bid in California last year. Mrs. Huffington trashed him publicly (in the *Wall Street Journal*) and privately. Meanwhile, Dole and his wife Liddy continued looking for a new church after columnist Cal Thomas shamed them into quitting Foundry Methodist in Washington, which has a liberal pastor.

Given Dole's troubles, he's now seen in the political community as too old, too pragmatic, and too uninspiring to win the GOP presidential nomination. But the conventional wisdom is wrong. What's remarkable is not that Dole has stumbled—frontrunners always slip and slide—but how little it has eroded his campaign. Dole remains far ahead of the nine other Republicans in the race. In fact, he has no serious challenger at the moment. If Colin Powell enters the fray, that won't doom Dole either. Instead, it's more likely to blow away Gramm, Forbes, and the rest, and create a two-candidate battle between Powell and Dole. In that fight, Dole arguably would inherit enough conservative support from Gramm, Forbes, Pat Buchanan, Richard Lugar, Bob Dornan, and Alan Keyes to ensure his victory.

For sure, Dole has lost some ground, but not much. David Smick, a Dole adviser and former aide to Jack Kemp, says there's a historical pattern in Republican presidential primaries: The frontrunner gets the nomination, but only after being humiliated. Part of Dole's humbling is that every small drop in opinion polls is loudly trumpeted. In a matchup with President Clinton in CBS's national surveys, Dole led 48 percent to 42 percent in August, but trailed 49 percent to 37 percent in October. Among Republicans, though, he's held his own, leading his closest rival 46 percent to 10 percent (Buchanan) in August in CNN's poll and 46 percent to 9 percent (Gramm) in October. With Powell added, the race is tied, Dole and Powell both at 31 percent.

Polls don't tell the whole story. Dole has actually gained in two critical areas: getting along with House Speaker Newt Gingrich, long an irritant, and assuaging the religious right. Scott Reed, Dole's campaign manager, has elevated maintenance of good relations between Dole and Gingrich to a top priority. And he's succeeded beyond his wildest dreams. This has meant adjustments for Dole, the Senate majority leader, including tacit acceptance of Gingrich's paramount role in devising and driving the Republican agenda. (The two meet every morning at 9:15 now.) Anything short of embracing the Gingrich revolution, however, would have put Dole at odds with conservative activists who dominate GOP primaries. Reed envisions the Dole-Gingrich relationship this way: "Dole is the senior partner, while Newt is the new, young partner who's brought in the business." Or this way: "Dole is the co-pilot of the change."

True, Dole has run into roadblocks in trying to propel the Gingrich agenda through the Senate. "It just takes so long in the Senate," he told me. "It's frus-

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trating sometimes. The House can do it so quickly, and when they pass something we're just warming up. We're in the opening speeches." But once the budget is finalized, Dole will probably be able to claim credit for achieving what he calls "the big stuff"—a balanced budget, a tax cut, welfare reform, and a Medicare rescue plan. Then, there's the smaller stuff, like tort reform, which Dole just barely got through the Senate, and regulatory reform, which may yet pass.

Some of these measures have been watered down to win passage, angering conservative purists. Gramm, the senator from Texas, has denigrated Dole as merely a dealmaker, not a leader. "He's right," Dole responds. "And he's going to vote for every deal I make."

William Bramhall

Dole's success in wooing Christian conservatives is even more stunning than his sudden chumminess with Gingrich. Of course, he's been zinged for pandering to the GOP's right wing. Dole insists that he's merely stressing positions, like opposition to abortion and support for English as the official American tongue, that he's taken before. But his dislike of affirmative action is entirely new, and he admits to changing "a little bit" on the issue. Pandering or not, Dole's pitch has worked so famously that Pat Robertson, president of the 1.7-million member Christian Coalition, had to explain in September that his lavish praise of Dole ("a lifelong conservative") didn't constitute a full-blown endorsement. It just sounded like one.

It was Dole's stinging attack last May on the TV and film industry in Hollywood that initially warmed his relationship with religious conservatives. "I think we have reached the point where our popular culture threatens to undermine our character as a nation," Dole said. The speech, delivered in Los Angeles, has turned out to be the only memorable address by any Republican presidential candidate in 1995.

Dole almost didn't deliver it. The speech was drafted in consultation with Ralph Reed of the Christian Coalition, Gary Bauer of the Family Research Council, and former Republican congressman Vin Weber. Reed also talked to Governor Steve Merrill of New Hampshire about it. But John Moran, Dole's finance chairman and a former New York investment banker, strongly opposed the speech, fearing it would jeopardize fundraising. The night before Dole was scheduled to give the speech, Moran met privately with him in Chicago and lobbied against it. To counter Moran, Reed dispatched Bill Lacey, the campaign's political director, to California to review the speech with Dole the next morning. Dole delivered it word for word. Fundraising hasn't suffered.

More recently, Dole's courtship of the Christian right has left practically no church unvisited. The Doles quit Foundry Methodist after Cal Thomas drew attention to the left-wing politics of the pastor, the Rev. J. Philip Wogaman. The Doles, Thomas wrote, "can pick up materials opposing the House GOP's Contract with America in the church lobby." They haven't settled on a new church. On Sunday October 22, Bob Dole went to First Presbyterian Church in Colorado Springs with James Dobson of Focus on the Family, a prominent Christian conservative. Elizabeth Dole was in Garden Grove, California, addressing the 11 a.m. service at the Rev. Robert Schuller's Crystal Cathedral.

Despite Dole's gains, his quick demise in the primaries is widely expected. Bob Beckel says the Dole campaign reminds him of Walter Mondale's drive for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984. Beckel was Mondale's campaign manager. Like Mondale, Dole has gone after big-name endorsements. He's bagged 13 GOP governors and 23 senators. His latest conquest is California governor Pete Wilson. Dole called Wilson the day he dropped out of the presidential race. Reed made contact with Craig Fuller, Wilson's campaign chief. After two weeks of negotiations involving Reed and Wilson's chief of staff, Bob White, Wilson appeared with Dole on October 23 to deliver his endorsement.

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Endorsements may not help much, but they don't hurt. Mondale, after all, won the nomination. What's harmful to Dole's chances are three of his personal traits: his tendency to make ill-advised comments, his lack of charisma, and his inability to delegate. Shortly after he was tied by Gramm in Iowa, Dole declared the straw poll of Florida Republicans on November 18 to be the real test. This was news to Reed and other Dole advisers. "I wish he hadn't said it," moaned one adviser. "Dole foolishly set himself up," says strategist David Keene. The Dole comment magnified the importance of a vote that Dole gains nothing from winning. Should he lose, though, his embarrassment will be all the more visible.

To minimize idle comments, Dole's strategists have advised him to avoid Sunday interview shows. The problem is Dole loves doing the shows. In his last appearance—*Face the Nation* on October 1—Dole caused himself trouble by mentioning a tax cut concocted by Senate conservatives, or "hard rocks," as Dole refers to them. Dole described the tax plan so vaguely that it appeared he was backing away from the $245 billion cut agreed on with the House. Gingrich immediately rebutted Dole. And it wasn't until the next day that Dole could explain he stood firmly behind the $245 billion reduction.

To keep Dole from winging it in public, his handlers have scripted more and more of his speeches—with mixed results. His best speeches have been those that Dole read from a prepared text: his Hollywood attack, an economic address in Chicago in September, his speech on values in Des Moines last April. But scripting backfired when Dole read from cards in the New Hampshire debate in October. He looked unsure and sounded wooden. Dole, by the way, was unscripted in October when he changed his mind on the gay contribution and claimed he shouldn't have returned it. But scripted or not, Dole has a speaking style that fails to excite audiences.

Rather than shedding jobs to devote himself to the campaign, Dole has added one. He's not only majority leader, but since Bob Packwood resigned, he's become de facto chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. All this has tugged him in different directions. His Senate staff is cautious, hidebound, and moderate. "Their strategy is to have no strategy," complains a Dole campaign aide. The campaign staff is more risk-oriented and right-wing, closer to Gingrich's staff in temperament and ideology. The result is Dole sometimes sound mild and pragmatic on weekdays, strident and ideological on weekends (when the campaign team gets hold of him).

None of Dole's flaws is fatal, especially against the current crop of uninspiring Republican challengers. But what if Powell runs? Dole likes Powell. He visited him last January and got a tour of Powell's new home in McLean, Va. They haven't talked since, but Reed chats occasionally with Powell pal Ken Duberstein.

Dole thinks Powell's character and bearing may be too little to carry him through the primaries. "You've got to get out with the rest of us and go to town meetings with 50 people and the snow's 10 feet high," Dole says. "You get a lot of questions you don't want to answer. Obviously Powell would come into the race in a fairly strong position. But does that translate into winning the caucuses?" Dole thinks not. If he's right, he's probably got the Republican nomination locked up. ♦

The Political Case Against Colin Powell

By Robert D. Novak

It was a bad night for Colin Powell last week at Washington's Omni Shoreham Hotel, where the American Conservative Union held its annual dinner. The General himself was nowhere to be seen. His transoceanic book tour completed, Powell was in seclusion deciding whether to seek the presidential nomination of a party he has not yet joined.

But his absence did not avert adverse comment about Powell, in table talk and from several of the eight announced Republican presidential hopefuls who addressed the right-wing diners. David Keene,

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the ACU's longtime chairman, concluded the evening by reading a statement about the general unanimously approved that afternoon by the organization's board: "His views thus far expressed put him outside the mainstream of the party whose nomination some say he covets and should make him unacceptable to conservatives."

Such criticism of Powell from the conservative movement is characteristically ideological, not political. The complaint by Keene and his allies is that Powell is doctrinally a Rockefeller Republican at best, or perhaps even a Clinton Democrat. There is little concern about what he would do politically to the Grand Old Party. But there should be.

On September 27, *Wall Street Journal* political columnist Gerald F. Seib compared Powell's potential impact in 1996 to Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower's actual impact in 1952. He wrote that Eisenhower's candidacy "brought into the polls, and into the GOP column, millions upon millions of new voters," starting with an "astonishing" 54 percent increase in the party's 1952 presidential vote over four years earlier.

Citing WEEKLY STANDARD editor William Kristol as his inspiration, Seib argued that a Powell candidacy, like Eisenhower's, would transform the Republican party into something quite different from what "exists in the wake of the 1994 election." His suggestion was that Powell "could take the current Republican party and extend it to reach minorities and independents."

The first of many problems with Seib's thesis is that party politics today bears so little resemblance to the landscape of 40 years ago. The two major parties are structurally less powerful and ideologically more homogenous. The Democratic right wing and the Republican left wing, both atrophied today, were alive and well in 1952. Accordingly, the transplant of a leader foreign to the doctrine and tradition of the party was not rejected by the 1952 GOP. It might be in 1996.

While many Republican state and local leaders covet Powell as a winner, they were not the driving force behind the great Republican victory of 1994. The money and foot soldiers of the Christian Coalition, the National Rifle Association, and U.S. Term Limits were the heart and soul of that historic triumph. Might they abandon not only a Powell-led ticket but GOP congressional candidates as well? The unanswerable question is whether Powell would sweep to an Ike-like victory or, instead, guarantee Clinton's re-election, perhaps even generating a serious independent conservative candidacy.

Shortly after the 1994 election, I asked speaker-to-be Newt Gingrich if he worried that the Republican 104th Congress would suffer the same fate as the Republican 80th Congress, which after two years of substantial accomplishment was rejected in the 1948 election. Historian Gingrich has given it considerable thought and has come to admire Sen. Robert A. Taft of Ohio as the dominant figure of the 80th Congress.

"If you took Taft's integrity and Taft's ideology," Gingrich told me, "and combined it with Roosevelt's political skills, then the victory of '46 would have ended the New Deal—if Taft had won the [presidential] nomination in '48 and explained why the 80th Congress made sense. The Republican party nominated [New York Gov. Thomas E.] Dewey, who didn't believe in the 80th Congress."

Then came Gingrich's greatest fear: The GOP chooses "somebody who spends the summer of '96 running away from this Congress. The only hope Bill

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Clinton has is not in Bill Clinton. It's in the Republican party." Talking a year ago in the flush of victory, he seemed to regard this as a most remote possibility. However, the notion of Powell as the Republican nominee was truly remote then, just one short year ago.

But assume that Powell is elected president. "I'm much more worried about what Powell would do to the party if he were elected—which I think he would be—than if he lost," says one prominent Republican, who publicly expresses nary a contrary thought about Colin Powell.

What he fears is what I observed some 40 years ago as a young Washington reporter when Eisenhower was president. He was not only vastly more popular than his party but consciously distanced himself from it (until, ironically, the last two years of his presidency, when for the first time confronting huge Democratic majorities in Congress, and looked a little more like a partisan pol).

Eisenhower's memoirs and those of his aides reveal he felt closer to the Democratic leaders in Congress than the Republicans. This posture contributed to the irrelevancy of the GOP, which was obvious then to anyone in Washington.

Contrary to the Seib column, Ike lacked coattails. His landslide election in 1952 produced but 48 Republicans in the 96-member Senate and only an eight-vote GOP margin in the House (compared to 51 Senators and a 55-seat House advantage in the 80th Congress). And the 1952 election was the high point of the Eisenhower years for the party. The Republican congressional majorities were lost in 1954, the second Ike landslide of 1956 resulted in two fewer Republicans in Congress than were elected in 1954, and the 1958 election was a Democratic tsunami (followed, oddly, by a slight GOP congressional gain in 1960, when John F. Kennedy was elected).

The Gallup Poll showed that voters professing Republican sympathies were 12 percentage points behind the Democrats just before Eisenhower was elected and 17 points down when he left. People who liked Ike did not care much for either Republican candidates for Congress or the party itself.

The Republican party in 1952 was starved for power, without a presidential election victory the past 28 years, and demoralized after its severe losses in the elections of 1948 and 1950. Today's Republican party, winner of five of the last seven presidential elections, is on the rise nationwide. Is it really a politically opportune time to bring in another general? ♦

Six-Pack: Handicapping The Presidential Race

By William Kristol

Lamar Alexander. Bill Clinton. Bob Dole. Newt Gingrich. Phil Gramm. Colin Powell. One of these six will almost certainly be our next president. Which will it be?

Not, I think, Clinton. Woodrow Wilson and FDR are the only Democrats since the Civil War to have won consecutive presidential elections. Bill Clinton is unlikely to follow in their footsteps.

Clinton has had a decent bounce in the polls recently—he's now near 50 percent approval, with a lead of several points against Dole. But this is likely to be Clinton's high-water mark. He's had a free ride for months from Republicans, who've been busy governing in Congress and campaigning against each other for president. And Clinton hasn't yet had to make the tough choices on the budget that are coming up soon. It will be downhill from here, and adviser Dick Morris's "triangulation" strategy won't help. Are there really many among the 57 percent of the American electorate who failed to vote for Clinton in 1992 who will support him in 1996? Doubtful. As the campaign progresses, Clinton's vote should be driven back down toward the 43 percent who did pull the lever for him once before.

Now, the Republican candidate—or the GOP convention, or the GOP Congress—could drive some former Perot or Bush voters into Clinton's arms. It's also possible that 43 percent could be enough to win again, in a three- or four-way race. But the recent flap over Clinton's quickly-retracted apology for the 1993 tax

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increase is a useful reminder of Clinton's two unavoidable weaknesses. His is the party of tax and spend—of government—in an era unfriendly to government. And Clinton is weak and untrustworthy at a time when Americans crave strength and honesty.

Clinton's political model is not, as some have suggested, Truman. Rather, it's Eisenhower—the only president this century before Clinton whose party lost control of Congress in his first off-year election. Eisenhower yielded the ideological and legislative initiative to the majority in Congress and made his role the voice of moderation and caution. By yielding the political initiative, Ike hurt his party's cause but not his own. Clinton hopes to achieve an analogous personal victory. But Clinton is no Eisenhower—and his opponent may be.

One advantage Clinton does have over most recent incumbents is the absence of a primary challenge. Though this appears a short-term benefit, it indicates an amazing collapse of ideological confidence on the part of his party's core constituency. McCarthy in 1968, Reagan in 1976, even Kennedy in 1980 and Buchanan in 1992—these men fought for the heart and soul of their respective parties. But no one now steps forward to fight for liberalism. Clinton has acquiesced in liberalism's thoroughgoing ideological rout, after suffering the most massive repudiation of any administration since Hoover's. Yet the left is too weak to produce even a protest candidate. Hoover was also unchallenged for the nomination in 1932, by the way. This didn't help him much in the general election.

But if Clinton is Hoover, who is the Republican FDR? Bob Dole increasingly seems more like Walter Mondale—or even Ed Muskie, the supposedly unbeatable front-runner for the Democratic nomination in 1972. Surveys in Iowa and New Hampshire suggest that Dole lost one-quarter of his support over the summer—support no one else has yet picked up. This indicates widespread disaffection with Dole, rather than enthusiasm for any of his rivals. Reports from Florida, whose November 18 straw poll is the next major event on the primary calendar, suggest he's in trouble there. A slim victory or a defeat in the straw poll would increase doubt about Dole's inevitable victory. And then, as the primaries approach, the issue of Dole's advancing years will become real to voters in a way it isn't when they're answering poll questions on the phone. In late February, after Iowa and New Hampshire, someone will have emerged as the alternative to Dole; as long as it's not Pat Buchanan, that candidate will have a good chance at taking the nomination.

Could he be Phil Gramm? If Republicans hadn't won control of Congress, Gramm would probably have been the nominee. Republican primary voters would have wanted a tough, conservative president to battle a dangerous Democratic Congress. It is an irony of history that the 1994 GOP victory, achieved on a Gramm-like platform of fierce resistance to big-government liberalism, has hurt Gramm's presidential hopes. In any case, having spent some $17 million this year, Gramm cannot find enough supporters to raise himself out of single digits in most states. In New Hampshire, more Republicans rate him unfavorably than favorably, and Buchanan's populist appeal continues to prevent Gramm from consolidating the right. If Gramm could ever get Dole one-on-one, he might beat him—but it looks as if he might not get that chance.

Lamar Alexander might. First, Alexander has to do well in the Florida straw poll (either second or a close third, but clearly in the first tier). Second, God must answer his surely fervent prayers that both Powell and Gingrich stay out. Alexander might then be well-situated to pick up support from abandoned Powellistas and Gingrichites as a younger, more-or-less populist, acceptably conservative, and reasonably reassuring alternative to Dole.

Alexander is a good candidate, and will do well with voters—and there are many—like the Florida GOP activist who said, "I'll decide based on what feelings I get when I meet the person. On issues, they're all talking the same thing." Alexander also has a superior campaign team, whose role in ushering the Wilson candidacy along to an early grave has been overlooked (except by Wilson, who urged his campaign contributors to support anyone but Alexander). And if Alexander emerges as a real possibility, I suspect polls will show him running well against Clinton, and with a better chance than Dole or Gramm of suppressing the yearning for a Perot (or even a Powell) independent candidacy. The Alexander victory would come about through a strong showing in New Hampshire, followed by a breakthrough in Georgia on March 5 and Florida on March 12, all of which propels him to victory over Dole in the Midwest and then California in the two weeks afterward. But again—all this assumes that Powell and Gingrich will have stayed out.

Gingrich? His negatives are awfully high—a stunning 70 percent of Americans now say they wouldn't vote for him for president, second only to Buchanan at 71 percent. (Perot is close, with 68 percent; Dole and Clinton are in the mid-40s; for now, Powell is the least unacceptable, with 27 percent opposing his candidacy.) Even committed Republicans say they don't want Newt to run.

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Still, the Republican vote in congressional races surged from 28 million in 1990 to 36 million in 1994—an increase comparable only to the partisan shift toward Democrats at the beginning of the New Deal. When a party has been transformed in this way, polls are unreliable. They didn't capture McGovern's strength in 1972 in a Democratic party taken over by the so-called New Politics, and they may not capture Gingrich's potential strength today either in primaries or the general election. But a Gingrich candidacy would be a bold—and probably foolhardy—roll of the dice. He should be taken at his word that there's only a 1-in-10 chance he'll do it.

That leaves Powell. An independent candidacy is not out of the question—Powell would in fact have a shot at winning a plurality in a three-way race against Clinton and Dole (or Gramm, or Gingrich). The virtue of an independent run is that Powell can, like Perot, avoid the primary season altogether. But a Republican run appears more likely; after all, Powell has said it would be easier, and polls show that two-thirds of Republicans want him to run. So let us say that, after an uninspiring debate among the Republican candidates on November 17 and an inconclusive finish in the Florida straw poll the next day, Powell announces his candidacy on November 21. What then?

Conservatives will be key, in two respects. First, can Powell convince conservatives that he will be an ally of the Gingrich revolution? As Gingrich has said of Powell: "If he wanted to represent a more inclusive version of the revolution, advocating better ways to get to where we're going, I think he'd be a very attractive and effective candidate." Gingrich, of course, is the most important conservative Powell will have to convince. For if Gingrich were to say that he could work well with a President Powell, that would make it virtually impossible to raise the standard of the Gingrich revolution against him.

But even before Gingrich pronounces such a judgment, anti-Powell conservatives will have an agonizing decision. Do they rally behind Dole? Do they support Gramm? Or do they remain splintered? Buchanan recently called on conservatives to "unite now in opposition to a Powell candidacy." Okay, but behind whom? Will Buchanan withdraw and support Dole or Gramm—either of whom might be able to stop Powell? Will Gramm withdraw for Dole? Unlikely. Fragmentation on the right will surely persist—and this will serve Powell well.

It's hard to forecast the actual dynamics of a Powell candidacy. His support might weaken as he becomes "just another candidate." But not necessarily; Powell might be a pretty good campaigner. After all, will he be out-debated by Dole? Out-charmed by Gramm? Don't bet on it.

What we do know is that over the past several weeks, as Powell has test-marketed his moderate views, there has been no discernible decline in his Republican support. In one recent poll of New Hampshire Republicans, for example, Powell beats Dole 34 to 25 percent—and he beats Dole 29 to 23 percent among self-described conservative Republicans (who make up two-thirds of the New Hampshire party). And in a national poll conducted by the Tarrance Group for THE WEEKLY STANDARD, Powell beats Gramm 58 to 29 percent among conservative Republicans.

Will Powell become less acceptable to conservatives as the campaign wears on? Yes, if he allows himself to serve as the counter-revolutionary candidate of the Establishment. No, if he runs as the admitted Establishmentarian who nonetheless appreciates the need for bold reforms and seeks to broaden and legitimize the new reform coalition. (Powell would be helped a good deal in this respect if he were to embrace term limits.) Much also depends on the disposition of the GOP primary electorate. Will their confidence in the ideological leadership of Gingrich and company in Congress allow them the luxury of voting for "character" and "leadership" in the presidential race?

The test will, of course, come in New Hampshire. Powell would need to win there—and his chances are improved by the fact that independents can vote, and many often have voted, in the GOP primary. Then, New York. Right now, because of the machinations of Sen. Al D'Amato, it appears that Dole might be the only contender on the ballot in the state's Republican primary. But Powell could force his way onto the ballot both by spending money and by daring the two senators to endure the obloquy of the press for denying New Yorkers an opportunity to vote for a native son.

A New York victory over Dole would send Powell south to Republican primary electorates that might be friendlier to Powell than one would think, in part because of his military background—and then probably on to a clinching victory in California on March 26. A Powell nomination would, it is true, produce a Buchananite third party. Even so, Powell would win easily in November.

One year before election day, the invisible primary that has been the 1996 presidential race thus far is almost over. The field has been narrowed. Now the rush to judgment begins. ♦

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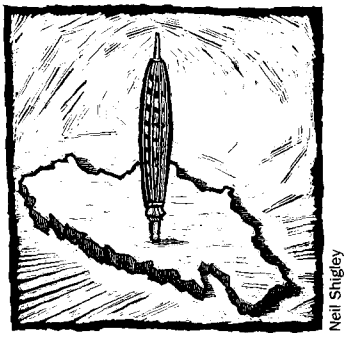
America, Bosnia, Europe: A Compelling Interest

By Robert Kagan

The first serious negotiations aimed at ending the Bosnian conflict begin this week in Ohio, but the debate over President Clinton's proposal to deploy 20,000 American troops to help enforce the as-yet-unachieved settlement has been raging for weeks. So far that debate has focused primarily on questions of implementation—how large the force, how clear the rules of engagement, how long the duration of deployment—and on the American goal in Bosnia. Should we seek a multiethnic state or a partitioned state? But for all their significance, these issues are only part of a broader and more vital set of questions Americans must answer in the coming weeks: Is the United States farsighted enough in this post-Cold War era to recognize threats to its vital interests *before* they have grown to crisis proportions? And, if so, are Americans willing to take the necessary risks today to avoid facing much greater risks five or ten years from now? For the United States as a world power, the problem of Bosnia is, and always has been, about more than Bosnia. It has been about America's will and capacity to use its power effectively to maintain a stable and secure Europe, which in turn is the essential foundation for maintaining a world order conducive to American interests and ideals.


Neil Shigley

With the specter of American ground troops in the Balkans looming, some critics of the proposed deployment have insisted that the Bosnian crisis poses no great threat to those interests and ideals. But the history of the last four years, and the history of this century, have demonstrated otherwise.

Political rhetoric notwithstanding, there has never been any real dispute between Republicans and Democrats that the United States has had an interest in suppressing the worst manifestations of the Balkan crisis. The aggression of Serb armies in pursuit of a "Greater Serbia" in 1991 and 1992 renewed the question, just recently answered in the case of Saddam Hussein, about whether the United States and NATO were prepared to stop and punish such aggression when it appeared on their doorstep. The sight of "ethnic cleansing" and the mass rape and murder of the defenseless challenged Americans' and Europeans' moral conscience and evoked parallels, however flawed, to an earlier time when the West acted too late to stop a genocidal rampage in the heart of Europe. Members of both parties in Congress called at one time or another for the relief of besieged Sarajevans, for a peace agreement that would preserve the Muslims and not reward Serbian aggression, for airstrikes, and for a lifting of the arms embargo against the Bosnian government. Each of these demands constituted an acknowledgment that the crisis in Bosnia was something the United States could not ignore.

What a nation refuses to ignore becomes an interest, like it or not, and in the case of Bosnia the inability of the Bush and Clinton administrations to remain aloof, though each might have preferred to, meant that eventually the United States would have to try to bring about a solution. The American interest in a Bosnian settlement, however, was not just the product of its "humanitarian" angst, nor of some Wilsonian dream to rid the world of aggression. From the first the issue of Bosnia was intimately bound up with the larger question of America's role in Europe and its relationship with its key European allies and NATO. Finally, that is what pushed Bosnia across the threshold from merely an interest to a "vital" interest.

Until a few months ago, American policymakers lived in a state of denial on this point. They insisted that while the United States might have legitimate humanitarian concerns about the fate of the Bosnian Muslims, the issue of Bosnia was not directly related to the issue of European stability and security and, therefore, was not an interest of sufficient importance to require direct American military involvement. The policy of the Bush administration, in fact, was precisely to try to build a diplomatic firewall around the

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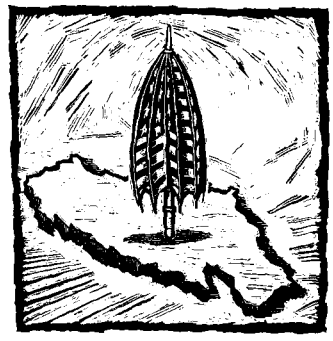
Balkan blaze, to separate it from Europe's great-power diplomacy, to avoid any distractions from America's paramount interest in the cohesion and vitality of the NATO alliance, and to keep it from becoming an explosive issue between the United States and Russia. The deployment of U.N. peacekeepers, albeit with NATO components, was a product of this effort to define the Bosnian conflict as a humanitarian crisis outside NATO's purview. Europe was the "core" of U.S. interests, insisted the foreign policy "realists" both inside and outside the Bush administration. Bosnia, although part of Europe, was the "periphery."

This artificial designation was driven more by fear than by logic. To acknowledge that the Bosnian crisis was of sufficient importance to require military involvement by the European powers was to acknowledge that Europe's only effective military organization, NATO, would have to be employed. And that, in turn, meant that the United States would have to involve itself on at least an equal basis with its NATO allies or have its commitment to the alliance called into question. Placing Bosnia on the "periphery" was the only way to avoid the inevitable pressure for a U.S. ground presence in the Balkans, a prospect that both Bush and Clinton understandably found unattractive.


Neil Shigley

But the goal of keeping the Balkan conflict in Europe separate from the issue of "Europe" proved elusive, and illusory. It was an illusion to imagine that a conflict in the Balkans, which over the previous century had always drawn in European great powers either to impose peace or to make war, could this time be kept entirely separate from European great-power politics. After all, the crisis began when Germany, in obedience to historical ties with the Croats, recognized an independent Croatia before Europe had devised any plan for managing the break-up of Yugoslavia. And the fiction of Bosnia's irrelevance to Europe was exploded entirely when the forces of the European powers, under the mantle of the U.N., took up positions in the Balkans.

The grandest illusion of all was the Bush administration's failure to foresee that the conjunction of European interest and American outrage would eventually turn the supposedly "peripheral" Bosnian problem into one that directly affected the "core" issues of America's relationship with Europe and the solidity of the NATO alliance. From the moment European troops were deployed, the crisis in Bosnia became a test of America's commitment to its NATO allies. Some leading American policymakers may have wanted to wriggle out of that commitment without quite admitting it. Former Secretary of State James Baker tried to square the circle last summer, when he argued for an American foreign policy of "selective engagement." As a good Atlanticist, Baker declared that the United States had to continue to be a "European power" in the post-Cold War era. But in the next breath he declared that Bosnia was a "European problem," not an American one. He obviously did not notice the contradiction.

In June, however, the inescapable logic of the Bosnian situation became painfully obvious. The fall of Muslim enclaves Zepa and Srebrenica, the Bosnian Serb seizure of European peacekeepers as hostages, and the apparently imminent collapse of the U.N.'s Rube Goldberg-like military mission presented a reluctant Bill Clinton with the unpalatable choices we have come to know so well. He could either give up on efforts to suppress and possibly settle the Bosnian conflict, which meant sending up to 25,000 U.S. troops on a dangerous mission to extract NATO's forces (under the U.N. umbrella) amidst an ongoing war. Or he could steel NATO's will and use its power to try to impose a negotiated settlement, knowing that the policing of such a settlement would also require that U.S. troops stand beside their allies. Clinton had the wisdom to see that, sometimes, the best way out is forward.

Some critics of the Clinton administration have lamented that he ever made such commitments to NATO, suggesting that he made those promises without ever expecting he would have to fulfill them. Whether Clinton knew what he was doing or not, however, the obligations the United States is now being pressed to carry out had been inherent in the Bosnian crisis all along. If the United States intended to remain a "European power," it had to accept Bosnia as an American problem.

Today, therefore, the future of NATO and America's role in Europe is riding to a considerable extent on the willingness of the American people and their Congress to support the deployment of U.S. troops to enforce a Bosnian peace agreement (should one be negotiated in the coming weeks). The Republican-led Congress may well approve Clinton's proposal, if only in deference to the commitments the president made and perhaps out of a desire to avoid taking responsibil-

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ity for the consequences of not approving the president's policy.

But in the course of debating the deployment of troops, there is likely to be much discussion about whether the United States has any real interests at stake in Bosnia. Already many Republicans have asked why America should not let the Europeans take the risks to solve "their" problem. And polls show that many Americans, though supportive of NATO in an abstract sense, may be opposed to lending support to the alliance in the form of ground troops. At congressional hearings on Bosnia two weeks ago, Sen. John Glenn warned the administration not to build its case on fidelity to NATO: "I don't think the average American person really feels that affinity for NATO now that the Cold War is over."

Glenn's comment, even if only partly true, points to a problem bigger than Bosnia. We may soon begin paying the price for our political leaders' failure to provide the public with a broader "vision" of America's role in the world. The "vision thing" has been much derided in the foreign policy journals, but without an overarching set of principles, every problem like Bosnia can appear to the average American as just one more island of trouble in a sea of troubles. Divorced from the larger context of European security and the well-being of NATO, it is almost impossible to justify risking a single American life in the Balkans. It would be as if those who opposed appeasing Hitler in 1938 had to base their arguments solely on whether the Sudeten Germans were or were not being mistreated by the Czechoslovakian government.

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Clinton and Republican leaders have only themselves to blame if the American people prove hesitant to fulfill an American commitment to NATO. Two years of playing the "economy president" and talking about the importance of multilateralism have done little to demonstrate America's vital interest in the continued vitality of NATO. Unlike Reagan and Bush, whose close friendships with key European leaders like Margaret Thatcher and Helmut Kohl were always on public display, Clinton has formed such a public relationship only with Boris Yeltsin.

Republicans, meanwhile, have sent a confused message on NATO these past two years. They made expansion of NATO a key plank of the Contract with America, on the one hand, but then have balked on fulfilling a commitment to NATO in the Balkans. Their repeated calls for a "return to normalcy" in foreign policy these past two years, moreover, have done little to remind Americans of the dangers of not playing an active role in the world to protect American interests.

Now, after four years of telling the American people that the Bosnian conflict was unrelated to American security interests, that it was, at most, a "humanitarian" crisis worthy of our concern but not our direct involvement, the crisis has come full circle. Clinton, Democrats in Congress, and those Republicans and conservatives still committed to American leadership in Europe must hurriedly build their case for involvement from the ground up. But the foundation on which that case must rest—a popular understanding of the importance to U.S. interests of European stability and the continued success of NATO—may have begun to erode.

There was a time, not many years ago, when American leaders were haunted by the "lesson of Munich." It was also the lesson of Manchuria, the lesson of Abyssinia, the lesson of the Spanish Civil War, the lesson, indeed, of the entire period between the first and second world wars. The failure to respond to isolated acts of aggression, by Japan and Italy, and to the encroachments of fascism in Europe, led eventually to the colossal failure to meet a far graver threat posed by Hitler's Germany. Then, too, Americans insisted on defending only immediately apparent "vital" interests and remained unconvinced until the bombs fell on Pearl Harbor that Hitler constituted a threat sufficient to justify the sacrifice of American lives. America's failure in the 20s and 30s was not only a failure of will, but a failure of foresight.

A majority of Americans and their representatives in Congress did not see, perhaps because they did not care to see, that the relative security of the years immediately following World War I was far from stable and could very quickly be destroyed through an accumulation of challenges posed and left unmet. Above all, they did not see how closely their fate was tied to the fate of Europe, economically, strategically, and ideologically.

More than six decades later, there are signs that a significant number of Americans are succumbing to the same failure of imagination. When they look to Bosnia, they see only Bosnia. Now it is time for our politicians to become leaders, to explain what is really at stake in the Balkans—or to accept without question responsibility for what may occur if we do not act. ♦

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The Sorry Tale of David Souter, Stealth Justice

By Jeremy Rabkin

David Souter, stealth candidate—that was the soundbite in the summer of 1990, when President Bush announced the unknown New Hampshire judge's surprise nomination to the U.S. Supreme Court. "Stealth candidate" stuck to Souter throughout that summer and during his confirmation hearings. That tag has rarely been used since then. But it still fits.

The radar the "stealth candidate" successfully evaded, however, was not the system operated by the National Abortion Rights Action League, or the National Organization for Women, or the Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund, or other such groups sounding the alarm.

No, it was the (then) 44 Republican senators and the entire Washington conservative establishment whose tracking antennae he eluded. Five years later, the damage is glaringly obvious. Souter, supported by conservative groups and unchallenged by conservatives inside the Bush White House, is now one of the staunchest liberals on the court—a more reliable champion of liberal causes than Clinton appointees Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer.

Indeed, Souter's positions are now almost indistinguishable from those of his predecessor, Justice William Brennan, the most relentless and effective champion of liberal judicial activism in the past half century. Souter has developed a warm feeling for Brennan, whom he has praised in lavish terms in public testimonials. The two have so much mutual trust that Souter routinely borrows the clerk Brennan himself recruits each year to help him in his work as a retired justice. Nor should Brennan's clerk feel at all out of place in the Souter chambers. Those who have served as clerks to other justices report that Souter's aides are among the most consistent leftists now working at the court. Souter picks them from a short-list of candidates prepared by the previous year's clerks, who in turn were picked from a short-list prepared by their predecessors, and so on back to the original set of clerks Souter inherited from Brennan.

Only one conservative organization, Howard Phillips's Conservative Caucus, raised its voice in opposition to Souter at the time of the confirmation proceedings (and then solely on the basis of doubts about Souter's personal views on abortion). Other conservative groups with wider agendas relied on assurances from the Bush White House—"Souter," said chief of staff John Sununu, "will be a home run for conservatives"—and were persuaded to issue statements of support for Souter.

How misplaced was this trust may be judged from the three policy fronts on which liberal advocacy groups directed the most fire against Souter in 1990. First and foremost was the issue of abortion. Critics worried that Souter would provide the crucial fifth vote to overturn *Roe* v. *Wade*. Instead, Souter, in a joint opinion with Justices Anthony Kennedy and Sandra Day O'Connor in 1992's *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, celebrated *Roe* as a landmark that all sides in the abortion debate must now accept. In three cases since then dealing with the proper scope of federal protection for abortion clinics, Souter has always voted with the abortion-rights advocates, leaving more conservative justices to worry over the First Amendment claims of pro-life picketers.

On church-state issues, which also drew special concerns at the time of his confirmation proceedings, Souter has again shown a reliable liberal bent. In *Lee* v. *Weisman*, in 1992, he concurred in the court's ruling that even an innocuous non-sectarian "prayer," delivered by a reform rabbi at a high school graduation ceremony, was an impermissible "establishment of religion." In 1994, he broke new ground in religiophobia when he wrote in a majority decision that the village of Kiryas Joel in New York state could not be allowed to elect its own school board (in a normal, secret-ballot vote) because its residents, Hasidic Jews, were too devoted to their religion. Even O'Connor and Kennedy, while concurring with Souter's opinion, expressed misgivings about Souter's reasoning and argued for more accommodation to these American citizens of orthodox faith than the vigilant New Hampshire jurist would allow.

Last term, Souter was still so worried about any sign of governmental endorsement of religion that he

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argued (in contrast to Kennedy and O'Connor) against allowing the University of Virginia to fund a Christian student magazine, even while the university was funding student activities and publications of every other description, including those of Muslim and Jewish student groups. Souter also worried about permitting the Ku Klux Klan to set up a cross on a public square, since the permit for the Klan might seem to send a "message" of "public endorsement"—of Christianity!

Concerns about Souter's likely votes on affirmative action were the third focus of critics at his confirmation hearings. Here, too, he has been every inch Brennan's successor. When the court voted this year to strike down racial gerrymandering of congressional districts, Souter took the opposite side. Kennedy and O'Connor voted this year to demand "strict scrutiny" of federal affirmative action programs involving explicit racial preferences; Souter again dissented.

Aides and advisers who participated in the selection of Souter in the Bush White House express disappointment and dismay—with varying degrees of bitterness—at Souter's performance. All profess to be quite surprised. Why has Souter turned out so differently than his sponsors expected?

One camp believes Souter remains captive to the sort of jurisprudence that goes on in state courts like the one in New Hampshire for which he toiled. Says Thomas Jipping, who provided supportive legal analysis for a coalition of conservative groups endorsing Souter's nomination in 1990: "Souter has the mentality of a state court judge, working through the details of common-law cases. He sees his job as adjusting the details of precedents and has no feeling for the larger constitutional principles that have to be the main concern at the level of the U.S. Supreme Court."

John McGinnis, in a recent article in *Policy Review*, characterized Souter as "a prisoner of legal process jurisprudence," which prompts judges to "avoid unprincipled decision making by focusing on the distinctive aspects of legal procedure such as *stare decisis*." *Stare decisis* is legalese for adhering to precedent.

At first glance, these suggestions seem plausible. For example, as McGinnis notes, Souter took pains to defend racial gerrymandering and racial set-asides in cases this past term not by offering some larger defense of racial balancing as the path to racial harmony, but by discussing the relevant precedents and simply offering a different interpretation from the majority.

Still, even a judge obsessed with precedent and process should tack right at times; Souter almost always bears left. And he is sometimes startlingly clear about his reasons. Souter's contribution to the joint opinion in the *Casey* abortion case, a long disquisition about precedent, approaches a level of judicial messianism beyond anything articulated by the Warren court. Souter argued there that the court had been right in 1937 to overrule previous decisions limiting government's regulatory powers, and in 1954 to overrule the old doctrine of "separate but equal," because, given new "facts," the "thoughtful part of the Nation could accept each decision to overrule . . . as a response to the Court's constitutional duty." But such a confession of error was not permissible in the case of *Roe* v. *Wade*. When "the Court decides a case in such a way as to resolve the sort of intensely divisive controversy reflected in *Roe*," he wrote, "the Court's interpretation of the Constitution calls on the contending sides of a national controversy to end their national division by accepting a common mandate rooted in the Constitution." Overruling *Roe* would undermine "the character of a Nation of people who aspire to live according to the rule of law. Their belief in themselves as such a people is not readily separable from their understanding of the Court invested with authority to . . . speak before all others for their constitutional ideals." Whatever else one might say of such self-serving bombast, it is not the rhetoric or the self-image of a humble legal technician. Rather, Souter presents the court as the nation's ultimate spiritual authority, as infallible in its sphere as the Bishop of Rome is in his.

In fact, this sort of pomposity leads other conservatives to interpret Souter's surprising record in Washington as the response of a small-timer, dazzled and made giddy by the vastly broader challenges of the Supreme Court. On the New Hampshire Supreme Court, he never had to deal with major First Amendment cases, with affirmative action, or other Solomonic problems. A Supreme Court clerk who has maintained a friendly relation with Souter reports his saying, "I never had to think about these things until I came to Washington. I just never thought much about them. I had no settled views." A Justice Department official who researched Souter's decisions on the New Hampshire Supreme Court disgustedly characterizes the bulk of them as "cow law."

But this explanation also fails, in the end, to account for Souter's performance. For even where he had much prior experience with issues before the court, Souter has still moved notably to the left. Nothing better illustrates this than his approach to criminal procedure cases—those disputing whether police and

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prosecutors have played fair with the accused. Such cases, in fact, generate a continual stream of appeals to the New Hampshire Supreme Court, and Souter's rulings in this area gave him a reputation for being hard-nosed. Liberal critics of his confirmation in 1990 accused him of being "pro-prosecution." In New Hampshire, Souter had voted to uphold a state "sobriety check point" imposed at random on passing motorists. He also endorsed the use of a "pen register," providing information on phone calls placed by criminal suspects, without use of a search warrant. These were not, Souter held, violations of the Fourth Amendment prohibition against unreasonable "searches," because the defendants had no legitimate "expectation of privacy" in these matters.

That Souter is no more. This past year, Souter dissented from the court's decision upholding a school district's policy of mandatory drug testing for high school athletes. As Scalia noted, the athletes regularly stand naked in the showers with each other, so it is hard to understand how they can claim strong expectations of "privacy." Even Ginsburg and Breyer went along with the majority. But Souter found drug testing in this setting an intolerable intrusion.

As a New Hampshire judge, Souter was generally reluctant to overturn criminal convictions on technical grounds. Joseph Grano, a law professor commissioned by conservative groups to review his New Hampshire record for the confirmation proceedings, concluded that Souter "does not reverse criminal convictions lightly. . . . When he finds error [by the trial court] Souter is not willing to reverse convictions to achieve a speculative deterrent effect or merely to make a point. Rather, if the error is truly 'harmless' . . . he will affirm the conviction."

Once again, we face a new Souter. In 1995, for example, Souter voted with a narrow majority to overturn the murder conviction of an Arizona man on the grounds that evidence potentially favorable to the accused had not been presented to the jury. Scalia, in a dissent joined by Kennedy, Clarence Thomas, and William Rehnquist, noted that two lower federal courts and all the state courts had rejected the claim at issue—that excluded evidence could show that the accused was "the victim of a 'frame up' by the police informer and evil genius [known as] Beanie." When the court's liberal bloc recently sought to expand federal review of state-level capital-punishment convictions—by liberalizing the standard for such appeals from "clear and convincing evidence" of "actual innocence" to the easier claim that wrongful conviction "has probably resulted"—Souter joined them unreservedly.

In a case dealing with the operator of a laboratory making illegal drugs, Souter again displayed a remarkable solicitude for the accused, and in a way that is hard to square with the general stance he adopted on the state supreme court in New Hampshire. Prosecutors in the case had presented evidence to the jury that the accused had voluntarily offered in an earlier, unsuccessful plea-bargain negotiation. Even Breyer and Ginsburg agreed that the verdict should still be affirmed. Only Souter and John Paul Stevens found fault with the conviction under these circumstances.

Souter again sided with Stevens—and against all other justices—in holding that California had somehow done injury to a convicted murderer when it changed the parole law after his conviction in a way that would allow him to seek parole only once every three years rather than once every year.

This philosophical change lends credence to the third answer most frequently offered in Washington to the Souter Question. According to this interpretation, Souter is a master dissembler, who quite carefully hid his true views to secure his appointment in an era when the key to advancement lay through a Republican White House. Mincing no words, one White House aide in the Bush administration puts the point quite directly: "The guy lied; he just snowed everybody to get his appointment."

Souter was certainly quite careful about how he presented himself. Liberal advocacy groups pounced on little bits and pieces of his record in New Hampshire, which were supposed to confirm his conservative leanings. As state attorney general in the late 1970s, for example, he warned in a policy memo that a proposed state law liberalizing access to abortion would make New Hampshire an "abortion mill." He also defended some of the more oddball conservative policies of the very conservative Gov. Meldrim Thompson, such as the instruction that public buildings put flags at half staff on Good Friday in commemoration of the death of Jesus. When Senate Democrats questioned him on such actions, Souter passed them all off as the dutiful actions of a political subordinate, defending his "client," the governor.

It was, in fact, very hard to pin down Souter's actual beliefs. Souter had been a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, a graduate of Harvard College and Harvard Law School—an educational background that equipped him to reflect on current issues and express his views with clarity and force. He served for more than a decade in the New Hampshire attorney general's office (in successively higher positions), where he came in

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close contact with a whole range of issues that offered much occasion for comment. His predecessor as state attorney general, Warren Rudman, used such comments as a launching pad for a successful run for the United States Senate. Yet Souter managed to avoid saying anything in public that gave any hint about his own views on any contested issue of public concern. Critics not only found little to fasten on in Souter's public statements. They could find almost no one of any stature in New Hampshire who had much to say about Souter, except to praise his conscientiousness.

He was not, in fact, a particular conservative favorite. His chief mentor and patron in New Hampshire was Rudman, a liberal Republican on most social issues. When Rudman urged then-Gov. John Sununu to appoint Souter to be the chief justice of New Hampshire, Sununu passed up Souter for a more reliable conservative. Sununu himself, while promoting Souter to conservative groups after his nomination, was not a strong supporter of Souter in White House deliberations. The White House had no secret assurances from Souter intimates about his "true" convictions. Years later, in a hagiographic profile of Souter in the *New York Times Magazine*, author David Garrow claimed that he found no one among Souter's closest friends and associates in New Hampshire who was surprised either by the tone or the result in the *Casey* abortion decision.

Sean Delonas

But there were people in the Bush administration, and a number with considerable influence within the White House, who wanted to ensure that Bush's first appointee would take a conservative line on the court. Some Justice Department aides did raise strong objections to Souter, as not being a proven conservative. The striking fact, however, is that, within the White House, there was no strong opposition to Souter. The appointment went forward because young aides at the White House did not seriously oppose it. C. Boyden Gray, Bush's counsel, recalls that his aides had supported Souter because they found his judicial philosophy reassuring. These were not Bushies—two of Gray's deputies helped found the Federalist Society, the network of philosophically conservative law students and lawyers. Gray himself, impressed by a personal encounter with Souter, went along. What made Souter so impressive to people who did not know him?

Souter had been considered for an appointment to the First Circuit back in the Reagan administration and much impressed some Justice Department conservatives at the time. This gave him credibility. Then and in later encounters, Souter talked about the need for judicial restraint and respect for "original intent" in interpreting the Constitution. One of Gray's aides recalls, "We may have erred by emphasizing judicial philosophy more than evidence of Souter's stands on concrete issues."

So, Souter talked a good game, and it was good enough to get him onto the Supreme Court. But it must be said that if he fooled people, he was fooling people who wanted to be fooled. In 1990, liberal advocacy groups denounced Souter as a "Bork without a paper trail." Many of his backers within the Bush administration hoped he would be precisely that. No one questioned Souter directly on how he would respond to a case urging that *Roe* be overruled. No one asked him directly how he would deal with contentious issues like affirmative action. But young conservatives, in the Bush administration as earlier in the Reagan administration, drew the inference that someone who spoke so well on constitutional philosophy would surely draw the same practical conclusions as they. And without any clear public record, Souter seemed to be a conservative jurist who could actually sneak past Senate Democrats and get himself confirmed. It was a beguiling dream. And it came to nothing. As one aide puts it, "He who lives by stealth, dies by stealth."

The lesson is that a conservative who can be easily confirmed is probably not worth having on the court. That is worth remembering if a Republican president gets to make the next Supreme Court appointment. In all likelihood, Souter will still be around, providing a constant reminder to the next Republican administration of what can happen when the White House ignores this lesson. ♦

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Brethren in the Holy Land: Settlers and Christians

By David Aikman

Hebron has always been a Jewish city, is a Jewish city, and will forever remain a Jewish city. And no amount of human effort will change the facts of God." That statement, made in Jerusalem's International Convention Center in mid-October by U.S.-born Eliezer Waldman, a leader of the 450 or so devout Jewish activists determined to defy the tide of Israeli land concessions to the new Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, was not in itself unusual. Jewish settlers on the West Bank—or "Judea and Samaria," as they invariably term it—are quoted almost daily making similar statements. What was striking was his audience. Whenever Waldman mentioned the Bible or Israel's right to settle within its biblical borders, hundreds of foreign evangelical Christians applauded or chimed in with loud "amens."

In one of the most fascinating political-religious alignments affecting the Middle East, there are clear signs of a rising determination among many American and other foreign Protestant Christians to provide both moral and material support to the estimated 130,000 Israeli settlers who live outside of Israel's pre-1967 borders.

Evangelical Christian support for Israel is certainly not new. Ever since 1948 there has been a strong conviction among grass-roots born-again Americans that the re-creation of the state of Israel was a fulfillment of biblical prophecy and that the Second Coming of Christ might well take place soon after this event. The best-selling non-fiction book in America during the entire 1970s was Hal Lindsey's *The Late Great Planet Earth.* An exponent of the "dispensationalist," prophecy-focused theology of Dallas Theological Seminary, Lindsey sketched out his own "end-times" scenario in the Middle East, with Israel as the hero-nation and a variety of others in supporting roles (he thought the Russians would be the biblical Gog and Magog invading Israel). Meanwhile, tour groups to Israel organized by U.S. and European evangelical churches have continued to arrive in the country despite the fear of terrorism. Israeli officials report that in 1994 some 61 percent of tourist arrivals were Christian groups. In the mid-1980s that figure was less than half.

Prime Minister Menachem Begin was the first Israeli leader to appreciate the political, economic, and perhaps moral value of evangelical Christian support for Israel. He actually bestowed awards on leaders like Jerry Falwell, who otherwise would have been shunned by much of the American Jewish community.

Begin also realized that Moral Majority-type Christians were more sympathetic to biblical rhetoric than to the secularist formulations of Israel's Labor party leadership, and he cannily encouraged a strong evangelical but non-proselytizing Christian presence in Jerusalem itself. One result: the establishment in 1981 of the non-profit foundation called the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ), led by South African Johann Luckhoff and staffed by more than 50 people from a dozen countries.

Since 1981, the ICEJ has alerted evangelicals around the world to the latest worries of Israelis who fear the results of the ruling Labor party's decision to sacrifice the occupied territories. Its tools for spreading this message have been its leaders' speeches in sympathetic churches around the world, a well-written and politically conservative newsletter called *Middle East Intelligence Digest*, and a glittery, week-long annual pageant, the Christian Festival of the Feast of Tabernacles, held in October at the time of the Jewish feast.

In the years since Begin's premiership, Israeli political leaders of all stripes have recognized the value of almost uncritical foreign support for Israel by showing up regularly to give well-applauded speeches to the 4,000 or so people who attend. What has changed in the past two years, though, has been the political intensity of the visitors' opposition to each new stage of the Rabin-Arafat peace process and their growing sympathy for the Likud. Ever since the full extent of eventual Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank became clear, the ICEJ and its overseas supporters have reacted with increasing outspokenness to the process itself. Last spring, the organization ran an advertisement in the *Jerusalem Post* calling on the government not to withdraw from Bethlehem and turn that city into "a second Damur," a Christian town in

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South Lebanon that was badly treated under PLO rule in 1982. The ad expressed concern "lest the Labor government hand over the city of Bethlehem to the murderous PLO and its Hamas allies."

That ad might have raised eyebrows and hackles among other groups of Christians living under Israeli rule, including the ancient communities that have traditionally been guardians of Christian holy places like the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and tend to support the Palestinian cause. But it has helped win over the affections of increasing numbers of Jewish West Bank settlers who believe their government is selling out the most cherished ideas of historic Zionism. "There is no question in my mind that the presence of God is here, with us," Garry Cooperberg, another ardent Hebron settler, told the Convention Center audience to more applause. "I certainly have been following the work of the Christian Embassy with much admiration and respect and pleasure."

Other West Bank settlers, sometimes individually, sometimes in groups, have taken to wandering into the organization's Jerusalem headquarters for a moral boost. There is even a Christian organization called Adopt-a-Settlement, which tries to encourage Christian churches and groups to visit settlements and even provide financial support to them.

"For Christians who want to support the right of Jews to this land, Hebron is a very important city, because it is the city of the patriarchs," explains ICEJ director Luckhoff. "We are not talking about excluding the Arabs. The embassy takes the view that there is room for both Jews and Arabs." How that co-existence is to be kept peaceful, much less policed on a day-to-day basis, is another question. Most settlers are flatly unwilling to recognize any Palestinian political or police authority over them. Rabbi Waldman told his Christian listeners: "We have always declared openly that we Jews living in Judea and Samaria will not accept any authority that is not Jewish authority."

Meanwhile, other pro-settler Christians cite Israel's founding premier David Ben-Gurion, not at all a religious Jew, who reportedly regarded extensive Jewish settlement in and around Hebron (in the pre-1948 era) as absolutely vital because the city was "the neighbor and predecessor of Jerusalem." Israel's King David established Jerusalem as his country's capital after conquering it from the Jebusites 3,000 years ago this year, according to a well-publicized Israeli anniversary campaign. Before that, King David used Hebron as Israel's capital for seven years.

But the pro-settler Christian sentiment in Israel is not just a theological predilection. Last month the PLO's religious affairs chief, Hassan Tahboub, categorically declared that, once Jewish and religious sites in the West Bank like the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron or Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem came under Palestinian rule, Jews would be forbidden to pray there. According to many pro-Israeli Christians, what's bad for the Jews in the West Bank is unlikely to be good for Arab Christians. In fact, the Christian Embassy says that it has encountered several Christian Arabs who express a fear that, once the Palestinian authority is established in Bethlehem in December, Christian Arabs' freedom to practice their faith, and perhaps even their personal security, may be at risk.

To underline these concerns and continue the drumbeat of attention to the possibly alarming consequences of Israeli West Bank withdrawal, the Christian Embassy recently organized under tight security an unprecedented half-hour visit by hundreds of foreign Christians to Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem to hear speeches calling on the Rabin government not to proceed further with West Bank withdrawals. "Bethlehem Will Be Jewish Forever," declared a banner they carried. In other displays of Christian-settler solidarity, smaller-scale visits were arranged to the heavily guarded Jewish settlement headquarters in Hebron.

If the Christian Embassy has its way, the process of "Oslo II," as the detailed agreement on Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank is dubbed here, will either grind to a halt or be reversed after Israel's next election, before the end of 1996. In that case, the political beneficiary of the pro-settler move by Christians will be opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu. After speaking to the assembled Christians at the Feast of Tabernacles early this month, Netanyahu described the Christian-Jewish political alliance for Zionism as "a partnership that has endured for more than a century and, if anything, is growing stronger."

That idea may well seem nettlesome to the sorely beset Prime Minister Rabin, who is almost as uncomfortable with zealous evangelical Christian pronouncements about "the land of Israel" as he is with the religious Zionist rhetoric of Israeli settlers on the West Bank. Before the Christian Feast of Tabernacles crowd, Rabin got a polite round of applause, while Netanyahu, the following day, garnered a standing ovation. There is an intricate irony here. When local Israeli military authorities at first ruled out the Christian demonstration at Rachel's Tomb, it was Rabin who overruled them and insisted it be allowed to proceed. He had been buttonholed during the Feast of Tabernacles by the Christian Embassy. ◆

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SINAPOLOGISTS

By Thomas M. DeFrank

With the galleys of former Secretary of State James A. Baker III's diplomatic memoirs literally hours away from final deadline, I knew we were in trouble when the Sinologists at the State Department began their security review of the China portion of Chapter 31 by carping about, of all things, the subhead. They were bothered that Baker had called the section "China: Saving a Troubled Marriage."

"A questionable title," one bureaucrat complained. "When were the U.S. & China ever married?"

This lament, of course, had no connection whatever to safeguarding classified information, the stated purpose of security reviews, customary for former high officials writing books. Baker cheerfully ignored the gripe. But it wasn't the exception. The China hands objected to more than two dozen passages—far and away the most extensive demarche by any agency or bureau looking over his manuscript. And in virtually every instance, their objections were aimed less at guarding national security than at protecting the feelings of Beijing's hypersensitive gerontocrats.

In the process, the Sinologists reinforced an impression widespread in diplomatic circles: that this administration, despite some recent positive movement in the relationship, still thinks that covering for Beijing passes for a China policy.

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"This was the worst case of clientitis we encountered," recalls a member of Baker's team.

At one point, for example, Baker notes in his memoir that his Chinese counterpart Qian Qichen was "predictably noncommittal" during a meeting. "Sullies the character of sitting foreign minister," a reviewer fumed. At another, Baker says he tried to deliver personally a letter from President Bush to Deng Xiaoping, "only to be rebuffed." This was too much for the Sinologists, who wanted the language changed to "but was unable to meet with Deng." Their rationale, helpfully noted in the margin: "He might have been ill at 87 years."

Baker: I declined his offer of a nearby conference room, assuming it was bugged.

★★★★★

State: *This is off limits. Tells the Chinese and the world that we don't trust China. Would Baker reveal such facts about [deleted], [deleted], and other countries we know routinely bug our officials?*

Baker: [Li Peng] was a technocrat by temperament and experience, a hardliner who made absolutely no apologies for his role in crushing the pro-democracy movement . . . totally unreconstructed.

★★★★★

State Official 1: *This might improve Li's position within the leadership!*

Official 2: *But it will have negative impact on our continuing efforts through diplomacy to bring about progress.*

Baker: The Chinese had signed lucrative contracts to deliver missiles to Pakistan. In all probability, several senior government and party officials or their families stood to gain from the performance of those contracts.

★★★★★

State Official 1: *These lines are insulting.*

Official 2: *And would harm relations . . .*

When Baker speculated that some government and Communist party officials "in all probability" might have a financial interest in the sale of missiles to Pakistan, the response was unequivocal: "These lines are insulting . . . and would harm relations . . . ."

And in a breathtaking attempt to cover up the obvious, the reviewers sought to get Baker to delete Chinese Premier Li Peng's defense of the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. "He is still head of government and we must deal with him," one reader objected.

Unlike the rest of the department, whose experts behaved like professionals and asked for only a handful of quite reasonable changes, mainly concerning intelligence, the censors of the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs repeatedly went over the top. In several instances, they even tried to muzzle Baker's personal opinions about the regime, on the dubious ground that the musings of a former official no longer involved in foreign policy might somehow damage ongoing diplomacy.

In return for putting up with second guessing of this kind, authors are given access to tens of thousands of pages of their official

Graphic by Doug Stevens

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documents. In the interest of producing a more accurate and interesting historical record, a security review was a small price for Baker to pay.

But the Sinologists at State—Deputy Assistant Secretary Kent Wiedemann and China desk officer William Stanton, now at the U.S. embassy in Beijing—pushed the national security argument beyond reason. The crux of their demarche, which was at least intellectually defensible, was that Baker should not reveal information from highly classified documents. "Should we be quoting confidential exchanges only four years later?" one asked of a colloquy between Baker and Qian Qichen that he wanted excised "due to continuing sensitivity of diplomatic efforts to resolve problems."

Never mind that the book is crammed with juicy exchanges from classified documents—all approved by the State Department. As a journalist, I was particularly intrigued by the department's willingness to allow Baker to disclose private comments by heads of state about one another. François Mitterrand, for instance, calls Saddam Hussein a "brute" and suggests the Emir of Kuwait is a sexist. Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak implies King Hussein of Jordan was bought off by Saddam Hussein and jokingly calls his friend Hafez al-Assad of Syria a "rug merchant." Saddam is also described as a "rabid dog" (the Emir of Bahrain), a "thug" (Mikhail Gorbachev), and a "crazy man" (Mubarak). All these barbs, taken from classified memoranda of conversations ("memcons"), were okayed for publication by less nervous specialists at State.

Thus, the more the Sinologists complained about classified sources, the more they gave away their true intent: to avoid offending the Chinese at all costs. Their objections ran the gamut from factual and occasionally appropriate to intellectually dubious, frivolous, and utterly absurd.

Baker: "The actions in Tiananmen Square were a good thing," [Li Peng] contended. "We do not regard them as a tragedy."

★★★★★

State Official 1: *Should we be quoting Li Peng in a confidential exchange?*

Official 2: *He is still head of government and we must deal with him.*

Baker: The only interlocutor who seemed the slightest bit reasonable was Jiang Zemin . . . Like Li Peng, he didn't think the slaughter at Tiananmen was a tragedy. "But I would not say it was a blessing either," he allowed.

★★★★★

State Official 1: *This won't help Jiang.*

Official 2: *[H]ead of state...[take] out.*

Baker: From start to finish, it was a surreal performance.

★★★★★

State: *Out; could harm current diplomacy.*

Baker: I thought this meeting was a disaster—a view shared by some members of our delegation, who later told me that they had privately concluded that the visit was doomed and, if asked, would have recommended that I drive directly to the airport and leave China immediately.

★★★★★

State: *Out; could harm current diplomacy.*

Baker writes, for instance, that, while hardly a soft-liner, party chief Jiang Zemin was "the only interlocutor who seemed the slightest bit reasonable." That didn't sit well at all with the reviewers. "This won't help Jiang," one noted ominously. "The head of state . . . out," another commanded.

But when Baker's commentary suited their purposes, objections to quoting from classified memcons magically evaporated. One reviewer seemed thrilled that Baker called Li Peng a "hard-liner who made absolutely no apologies . . . totally unreconstructed."

"This might improve Li's position within the leadership!" he gushed. (A superior disagreed: "But it will have negative impact on our continuing efforts through diplomacy to bring about progress. It is not helpful to criticize in public an acting head of government .")

After intensive consultations with State, the Baker team deservedly rejected virtually all of these complaints. But it should be noted that the secretary bent over backwards to accommodate the censors. In a few instances, he eliminated material even when he was convinced they were blowing smoke. He agreed to remove a reference to his own skepticism about a particular Chinese pledge. And on page 592 of the book, Baker had originally included a quote from the letter from Bush to Deng mentioned above. The China hands screamed bloody murder, asserting the confidentiality of the exchange, so Baker deleted it—even though State allowed him to publish similar passages from confidential Bush letters to other world leaders elsewhere in the text.

As a result, I am unable to quote from the Bush-Deng letter here. But any dispassionate reader would wonder what was so objectionable. It is simply a polite but firm warn-

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ing from Bush to an old friend, stating that more was necessary from Beijing to prevent further deterioration in an important bilateral relationship.

Perhaps the Sinapologists' real problem was that the passage suggested George Bush had been tougher on the Chinese than candidate Clinton repeatedly alleged in the 1992 campaign.

Lest anyone doubt that politics was at least as important as diplomacy to these reviewers, a mildly self-congratulatory comment on Bush administration policy toward North Korea elicited this remark: "Does he mention the major triumph of the Clinton administration in getting agreement for DPRK's shutting down their dangerous nuclear weapons program?"

Obviously, diplomacy is serious business, fraught with sensitivity and often requiring the balancing of somewhat contradictory objectives and interests. But the China hands at State—considerably more concerned with the reaction of their Chinese clients than with the safety of classified information—abused their clearance authority in the interest of political expedience. In doing so, they also demonstrated that they still haven't figured out how to deal with Beijing. ♦

Journalism

Low Profiles

By Andrew Ferguson

If you picked up October's *GQ* magazine, the one with John Travolta on the cover, you probably assumed, reasonably enough, that you could read an article about John Travolta if you wanted. You would have been only half-right.

That is indeed Travolta on the cover, hips jutting, fingers splayed, tongue glistening, a Creature from a Seventies Black Lagoon. And yes, over there on page 182, that is an article with the name "John Travolta" in the headline. But the truly important words are just below: "By Tom Junod." Junod is a writer-at-large for *GQ*, and if you want Tom Junod to tell you about John Travolta, you're going to get an earful about Tom Junod, too. And if you don't like it, you can go buy another magazine with John Travolta on the cover.

Not that it would make much difference. All the upscale mass-circulation magazines seem to suffer from the same malady these days, whether *GQ*, *Vanity Fair*, *Esquire*, or any other of the "slicks." Their production values are uniformly high, their pages so fragrant and thick and luscious it's all you can do to keep from slurping them into your mouth; but reading them is a less appealing option. In particular, the celebrity profile—always a staple of this market—has fallen on hard times, a victim, and not the only one, of the self-referential journalist of the 1990s.

Junod's article begins with John Travolta giving Tom Junod a dancing lesson. More precisely, the star is teaching the writer how to duplicate the walk Travolta perfected in *Saturday Night Fever*. "I tried walking like John Travolta," Junod writes. "I tried swinging my arms. I tried rolling my shoulders. I tried..." and so on. Nothing works. Junod worries that his hips aren't loose enough; he confesses that his testicles don't swing as they're supposed to. Poor Tom Junod is having a heck of a time—as is the reader, who is 250 words into the story and has yet to read much of anything about John Travolta.

Skip to the top of the next section of the Travolta profile. "I told him a sad story," Junod writes, "and he cried." Here at last is some solid information: John Travolta cries easily. Suddenly, in print, Junod offers the reader a gusher of data: The star likes iced tea, seldom drinks alcohol, often orders three desserts at a time, and uses the word "pee-pee." Then the pace of the story slows, and we're back to business—back to Tom Junod. "If John Travolta can do what he does because he is so big," Junod wonders, "then does that make everyone else . . . namely me . . . sort of, um, small?"

This is the theme Junod wrestles with for the duration of the story. At its close we read: "I had interviewed him about his life, his childhood, his acting, his comeback [alas, none of this material made it into the article], and yet the interviews were never about him—somehow they were always about me. . . ." Perhaps you thought John Travolta was a famous movie actor, or a faded cultural icon, or a former sex symbol reestablishing himself as a character actor in several hit movies. And so he may be. For *GQ* readers he is something more: He is an occasion for Tom Junod to think and write about . . . Tom Junod.

The self-referential celebrity profile is a new twist in the annals of show biz journalism. For decades, reporting on movie stars was merely an adjunct to a movie studio's larger public relations apparatus. Back in the thirties or forties, a *Photoplay* profile of, say, Joan Crawford might show the psychotic star surrounded by her beleaguered children, but mom would look loving, and the kids

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would look happy, and MGM's photo department would have taken care to airbrush the cigarette burns from their little scalps. A squib on Errol Flynn's visit to a Hollywood High football practice would neglect to mention that he was trying to seduce the quarterback. Of course, we are not allowed to think that our present-day journalists would be a party to duping the public in this way. Journalists today are skeptical, hardheaded; they afflict the comfortable. They have learned the lessons of Vietnam, and of Watergate. They speak truth to power.

They are not, however, above consoling the subjects of their profiles, so long as it places them at the center of the action. Last spring, Kevin Sessums of *Vanity Fair* unfurled a long narrative about the ingenue Meg Ryan. The profile began, as profiles usually do nowadays, *in medias res*, with Kevin escorting Meg around downtown Savannah, Ga. She's hungry; he feeds her. They discuss a book they've both read about Savannah: She didn't like it; he did. A rapport is established. Sessums is too modest to come out and say it, but it's pretty clear that Meg Ryan thinks Kevin Sessums is okay—more than okay. Before long she is telling him about her estranged mother, "speaking out for the first time about the situation." A scoop!

After twenty or so paragraphs, Sessums sits down for a heart-to-heart with Dennis Quaid, Meg's husband, and tells him that he's very moved by the two of them. Before the reader can gauge Quaid's reaction, the scene shifts. Now Sessums is talking to Meg again, about Quaid's cocaine addiction. He is careful to render his own observations verbatim. Sessums writes: "'Cocaine may harden one's heart, but it makes one, well, less hard in other places,' I venture. 'If you were intimate with him, how could you not know he was snorting coke?'"

Meg's answer is less important than the question itself, and the fact that Kevin asked it at all. The message is unmistakable. Not just any journalist—not just any guy—can sit down with a gorgeous movie star and ask her point-blank about her husband's erections. Is it any wonder that by the end of the story, Kevin is feeding Meg *again*?

"I place the sweet potato pie on the kitchen counter," he writes. And once more he assumes the journalist's burden.

"'Do you pray?' I ask her."

From sex to God: This is a tough interviewer.

"She begins to sob. 'I'm sorry—I haven't . . .' The tears won't stop.

"'Are you O.K.?' I ask, crossing the room to where she has sunk into a sofa and holding her until she can regain her composure."

With Meg safe in Kevin's arms, the story deliquesces to a gentle close. She does regain her composure. And then they dig into that sweet potato pie. Just the two of them. Kevin and his movie star.

Bill Garner

It is important to stipulate here, in the interests of fairness, that Sessums's self-references—like Tom Junod's, like the dozen other instances that appear monthly in the slicks—are wholly unnecessary. They add nothing to a reader's knowledge of the celebrity being profiled, and I cling to the conviction that readers are drawn to a movie-star profile because they want to know about the movie star and not the journalist. (Why anyone would care to read about Meg Ryan or John Travolta in the first place is a separate mystery.)

Of course the self-referential technique has its uses. It makes the unpleasant task of constructing a narrative infinitely easier. "Carly greets me at the door," writes Marie Brenner in a *Vanity Fair* profile of Carly Simon. "We are not strangers." And so it goes: "One morning Carly telephones me, saying . . . ." "When Carly and I sit down for our first interview . . . ." "One evening Carly telephones me, saying . . . ." It is an impeccably postmodern device. The celebrity profile becomes a story of a writer trying to write a celebrity profile.

The technique also, most deliciously, lends itself to self-aggran-

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dizement, a quality prized by all writers. In the March *Esquire*, Bill Zehme wrote a profile of Sharon Stone that revealed some data about the star, but none so important as the fact that Bill Zehme is one of her pals.

He has ridden in her car. He has cooked with her. He has met several of her beaux. And, hold onto your hat, he has gotten a massage with her. "I have lain naked with her," he wrote in the story's lead paragraph, "only because she insisted, only because other people were present, only because I could tell you about it."

Telling us about it, actually, is the point. We learn relatively little about Sharon Stone, but the average *Esquire* reader—that unhappy fellow who's still trying to get his new suspenders to look like they do in the Perry Ellis ad—that guy surely comes away thinking that Bill Zehme is one lucky dude.

But there is more going on here even than this—more, even, than the poignant spectacle of puppyish hacks nuzzling up against movie stars in hopes that the glamour rubs off.

Consider the situation the poor writer finds himself in. People become writers because they want to draw attention to themselves. To a man (or woman), they're egomaniacs. And at last they've met professional success. A slick magazine is paying them big money. And then to be confronted by a vacuum-with-legs like . . . *Keanu Reeves* . . . or *Brad Pitt* . . . or *Nicole Kidman*. And these nullities, these pouty-lipped *zeroes*—the writer has to make them interesting! Even the most starstruck journalist would much rather write about something of intrinsic interest: "namely me," as Tom Junod would put it. So he does.

A final question remains: Why do editors let them get away with it? The answer lies in the dimmest past, in New Journalism, the profoundly influential "movement" begun in the early 1960s. Tom Wolfe wrote the genre's manifesto, in 1973, with a good humor that just skirted the edges of pomposity. New Journalism, he said, was "the first new direction in American literature in half a century." New Journalists "penetrated the lives of their characters," just as the great realist writers of American fiction had done. The journalist of tomorrow would abandon the stale constraints of old journalism and fashion his reportage into narratives by means of techniques heretofore known only to novelists: dialogue, scene-setting, the accumulation of status detail, and, most trickily of all, their characters' point-of-view. Thus could a journalist re-create, with unprecedented vividness, events he may not have seen himself.

Bill Garner

With Wolfe and his colleagues, magazine journalism changed forever. The word went forth—a bacillus cratering through the journalism schools, infecting the ranks of aspiring freelance writers, all of them unaware that there was one minor problem with New Journalism: Not many people could pull it off. Hardly anybody, in fact. Done right, it required the rarest combination of gifts: heroic reporting skills on the one hand, and, on the other, a technical mastery found only in superior literary artists.

You don't hear much about New Journalism anymore. It survives only in its decadent phase—as an influence, an indulgence, an excuse, a license, a husk of Wolfe's lofty ambitions. All celebrity profiles these days set scenes—whatever scenes the writer happens to have been in. All include dialogue—whatever the writer said to the celebrity, and vice versa. And all of course are drenched in point-of-view—the writer's. And it is, almost without exception, a point of view that is stupefyingly banal.

Here, then, is what remains of "the first new direction in American literature in half a century." We are left with such scenes and dialogue as this, from Scott Raab's profile of the sleazeball movie star Mickey Rourke, in a recent *GQ*:

> I ask him about [a] 16-year-old supermodel.
>
> "I would not go near a 16-year-old girl. I don't even [bad word for sexual intercourse]. I've gotta be in love to [bad word] a woman. I'll get a [bad word for oral sex], but I cannot [bad word] unless I'm in love.
>
> "Me neither," I say. "How about a [bad word for oral sex again]?"
>
> "Open it up," Mickey says, laughing, pointing at my crotch . . .
>
> My zipper stays closed.

Well, thank God. Writers have to draw the line somewhere. ♦

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WHAT'S NEXT FOR AMERICA?

Commentary

November 1995

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Media

ALIENS, LIZ . . . AND NEWT

By Tucker Carlson

For bored shoppers seeking titillation in the supermarket checkout line, the October 10 issue of the *National Enquirer* did not disappoint. Sandwiched between write-ups on Mexican wolf boys and Oprah's suicidal niece, one story stood out as the week's most lurid. "Shockingly, at least 600,000 children are being bought and sold on our nation's streets today for the perverted sexual pleasure of adults," began a story on page 19. "Incredibly, some of them are only toddlers, 3, 4, and 5. It is one of America's greatest shames!"

Toddler sex slaves? For sale on city streets? It was enough to make even jaded *Enquirer* readers put down their groceries and pay attention. And it got worse. In prose as purple as any churned out at the tabloid's Lantana, Florida, headquarters, the author went on to describe "boys and girls standing in doorways, waiting for lecherous lowlifes to express interest"; pimps "buying and selling children like so much meat in a butcher shop"; and kids willing to "have sex for whatever it takes to survive another day—a hot pizza, a place to sleep, a coat to wear."

Shocking stuff. But so was the byline that accompanied the story: "Rep. Jack Kingston (R.-Ga.)"

Or maybe not so shocking. As regular readers of the tabloid know, Jack Kingston isn't the first member of Congress to write for the *National Enquirer*, though he may have come the closest to replicating the newspaper's unique prose style. Kingston's colleagues have been appearing in the *Enquirer* for years, flying far below the radar of official Washington to reach an otherwise unreachable audience. At least that's the idea.

Like any sensible politician, Kingston didn't just describe America's latest, greatest shame; he offered a solution: "We need a tough new federal law to combat child prostitution, one that provides hefty mandatory no-parole sentences for the adults involved. I will work hard to see that such legislation is passed."

How did a respected second-term Republican from Savannah end up in pages normally reserved for voluptuous gal pals, cheating hubbies, and Liz? Not by accident, says his press secretary, Robyn Ridgley, who boasts that her boss has appeared in the tabloid quite a few times. "Jack is not a snob towards the *Enquirer*." Nor should he be, says Ridgley, since tabloids like the *Enquirer* "do more to research the accuracy of their stories than probably any major newspaper combined, and they will have less corrections than the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*. They go out of their way and probably have more lawyers on staff than anyone else because they have so much at stake."

Ridgley should know. She used to work in the "inner circle" of television producer Norman Lear (she describes the experience as "fabulous, fabulous" and Lear as "an old-fashioned family man," who "loved my conservative, old-fashioned family values—but that's another story"). She also once wrote an episode of *The Facts of Life*, an early-80s sitcom. "I've got like 20 years experience in Hollywood with every superstar you could name," she says. So when Robyn Ridgley talks about tabloids, it's with the gravity of an insider. "They can be your greatest friend or your greatest enemy," she explains.

For Jack Kingston, Ridgley says, they've been a boon companion, "an extremely valuable asset." And why not? Ridgley claims that she and the congressman have nothing against residents of trailer parks, nor do they "judge people who read tabloids—let 'em." From time to time, editors from the *Enquirer* "call us to give us the opportunity to what we call 'blast' something. They bring us the facts and figures on a story they're working on and they'll ask us to fill in a quote." Ridgley admits that the paper does take liberties with the truth—in fact, she says, in her days with Norman Lear, she never spoke to the *Enquirer* because "my integrity wouldn't allow me to." Then again, Norman Lear doesn't have to run for office every two years. Jack Kingston does.

So if the estimates about kiddie hookers sound unlikely, not to say ridiculous, so what? "We can't swear to it," says Ridgley, "but just like other statistics, they're as sound as—well, you know." Accuracy, in other words, is not the key. "The key," Ridgley explains, "is to communicate with the people in your district. If it does that, we'll do it."

And what do the folks back in Kingston's district—in Georgia counties like Bacon and Appling and Toombs—think of the story? Richard Fogaley, an editor at the daily Savannah *News and Press* who has covered Rep. Kingston in years past, sounds baffled when asked if child prostitution is a major issue in the mostly rural district. "No, never really have heard much talk about it. I mean, like anywhere else in the South, it would be taboo," he says. "But I've never heard it come up as an issue.

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I don't think anybody here has realized he had an article in the *Enquirer*. I'm stunned, to be honest with you."

They may be stunned back in Savannah, but not on the Hill, where the *Enquirer* is considered a prime publicity vehicle for congressmen hoping to sway preliterate voters. "You're reaching probably over a score million Americans, and they're in my judgment a core Republican constituency," says Tony Blankley, whose boss, Speaker Newt Gingrich, has had a number of pieces in the *Enquirer*. "If you want to reach the people who are eventually going to be voting, you have to reach beyond those people who are *MacNeil-Lehrer* junkies. And the *National Enquirer* precisely fits that bill. It is in fact a legitimate news organization. It has almost routinely won its libel suits." (With an emphasis on the "almost": Two weeks ago actor Clint Eastwood was awarded $150,000 by a jury that found the *Enquirer* had libeled him by printing an interview that never took place.)

REAL-LIFE CLOSE ENCOUNTERS

WE WERE ABDUCTED BY SPACE ALIENS

By PHILIP SMITH

Space aliens abducted a housewife from her 12th-floor apartment and took her for a ride in a UFO . . . a hotel manager was captured by creatures with "stick man" bodies and domed heads . . . an alien injected strange fluids in a woman, and afterward she could eat only dairy products.

These are just some of the bizarre accounts of alien abductions collected by veteran investigator C.D.B. Bryan for his new book "Close Encounters of the Fourth Kind." Bryan opened his files exclusively for ENQUIRER readers to reveal some of the most baffling incidents he's researched.

Transported on a column of light

Snatched from her high-rise apartment

America's shame: 600,000 children are chained to a life of prostitution

By Rep. JACK KINGSTON (R.-Ga.)

Shockingly, at least 600,000 children are being bought and sold on our nation's streets today for the perverted sexual pleasure of adults. Incredibly, some of them are only toddlers, 3, 4 and 5.

It is one of America's greatest shames.

You can find them in any large city . . . and in more and more small towns. Boys and girls standing in doorways, waiting for lecherous lowlifes to express interest.

If they try to escape, their pimps beat them or threaten them with death.

Those just getting into the game, without pimps, will have sex for whatever it takes to survive another day — a hot pizza, a place to sleep, a coat to wear.

Some are runaways, others are "throwaways" whose parents don't want them around. Those who don't get off the streets will probably die young — from drug overdoses, from violence at the hands of angry pimps or from terrible diseases including AIDS.

One university study revealed the average age of children entering the world of prostitution is 14. But some are as young as 7 — and a few are still babies, 3, 4 and 5, sold by their own parents.

Dr. Lois Lee, Ph.D., founder of Children of the Night, a California shelter for child prostitutes, estimates there are some 600,000 children in the U.S. being used in prostitution. Some estimates go as high as 2.8 million . . . and the problem is growing.

Here are just a few of the sickening cases:

IN ANAHEIM, Calif., a man and woman were charged with forcing their own 13-year-old daughter into prostitution to get money for drugs.

IN KENTUCKY, a man operated a private shelter for youngsters and billed himself as a minister — but he was buying and selling children like so much meat in a butcher shop.

IN WASHINGTON, D.C., two little girls ages 7 and 8 were sold repeatedly for sexual pleasure. The female pimp, a junkie, got $20 a visit. It then surfaced that at least FOUR mothers in Washington had compensated to police that the pimp had tried to recruit their children.

Gerald M. Caplan, former director of the National Institute of Justice, reports that in most police departments there is "little interest" in the problem. Many officials won't even acknowledge that such an ugly problem exists in their cities.

We need a tough new federal law to combat child prostitution, one that provides hefty mandatory no parole sentences for the adults involved. I will work hard to see that such legislation is passed.

You can help by contacting your U.S. representatives and senators and asking for action.

Our children are America's most important resource. If we cannot protect them from degradations such as this, how can we call ourselves a civilized society?

...YOU can help rescue these kids from the streets

A banana for your thoughts

This orangutan was in no mood for monkeyshines when it was snapped recently at the Duisburg Zoo in Germany. Talk about a face only a mother could love!

"We can't rob Peter to pay Paul we aren't paying him either"

Grandma knows

A proud grandmother ran into an old friend while walking with her two grandchildren in the park. "How beautiful they are," the friend remarked. "How old are they?"

"The lawyer is 2," the beaming grandmother answered, "and the doctor is 4!"

Wake up, insomniacs! You may just need less sleep

Insomnia is nothing to lose sleep over, according to a new study.

Many people who think they're insomniacs actually just need less sleep than others.

"Helping these people sleep longer doesn't make sense," said study author Dr. Kenneth L. Lichstein, professor of psychology at the University of Memphis. "Most are staying in bed too long."

Dr. Lichstein said that so-called insomniacs should figure out how much sleep they need. And instead of rolling around in bed fretting about sleep, they should simply climb out and do what they like.

"After about a week of doing that, people stop viewing themselves as insomniacs and feel a whole lot better."

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Sounding a bit defensive, Blankley describes an *Enquirer* not at all like the sex-and-celebrity-drenched rag most people remember: "I think a lot of people who don't read the *National Enquirer* might put it in the same category as the freak shows you see in tabloids, but it's not. It is not a space alien magazine," he says, obviously unaware that the latest issue carries a story entitled—yes—"We Were Abducted By Space Aliens." The *Enquirer*, says Blankley, is "entertaining, written in a very accessible manner, and fun to read. It touches beyond the hard-core, nuts-and-bolts, wonkish news coverage of government."

That's for sure. Take a recent piece by Sonny Bono, in which the new congressman offers "tips I followed to achieve success in life—and I guarantee that if you use them, they'll make you a success, too." Under the heading "Don't look back," Bono tells readers, "One thing I like about politics is that you can kiss and make up after an election night. Sadly, that's often not how people act in their personal lives. A perfect example is the nasty public blast my ex-wife Cher made after I won the Congressional election." (She compared him to a used-car salesman.) The congressman concedes that Cher's remark "is a funny zinger, but it also shows that she's still carrying the bitterness of our divorce—and that's not healthy. It's been 18 years since our split. She should stop letting the past cause her misery."

Tony Blankley has a point—taking a dig at your ex-wife in the pages of the *National Enquirer* defi-

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nitely does not qualify as "hard-core, nuts-and-bolts, wonkish news coverage of government."

But then, neither does former-congressman Tom Luken's 1989 *Enquirer* story, "Do We Need A National Lottery?" Luken, then a Democrat representing a Cincinnati district, led the article with an offer almost surely not found in his regular campaign literature: "Do you want to become an instant billionaire?" he asked in an eye-catching first line. "You could have that chance under legislation I've introduced in Congress to begin a billion-dollar national lottery." What *National Enquirer* reader could resist such a pitch? What congressman could resist making it?

Not many, apparently. Politicians, says long-time *Enquirer* editor Iain Calder, write pieces for the tabloid "constantly, really quite often." Bob Dornan of California, for instance, "has been in our paper a number of times—not his most extreme positions, but things that seem to be common sense." Lee Atwater was another fan. ("Lee used the *Enquirer* to help get George Bush elected," wrote Atwater's widow, Sally, in a piece for the paper two years ago.) Politicians "are generally quite cooperative with us," Calder says. And for good reason: "We only go to them on things that we know they're going to agree with us on."

It's easy to see why an offer to write for the *Enquirer* might be tempting for a publicity-starved elected official. A former press secretary for retired California congressman and sometime *Enquirer* contributor William Dannemeyer remembers the conundrum: "You sit back as a member and you think, 'do I risk the chance of getting ridiculed by my peers, or do I just go ahead and put it in there and reach all these people?'" For some, it's not a hard question. ♦

Books

Why We Weren't in Vietnam

By Joshua Muravchik

"Tell me what you think of [the 1960s], and I'll tell you what your politics are," once said Joseph Epstein, the editor of the *American Scholar*. Of course, you might make much the same point about the 1980s or the 1950s, but the 1960s stand out as a decade of particularly intense cultural and political convulsions.

The American liberalism shaped by Roosevelt and Truman, which was anchored in blue-collar precincts, and which gave us the welfare state, internationalism, and civil rights laws, was killed off in the 1960s. This set the stage for decades of battles between the new liberalism of McGovern, Carter, and Clinton and the new conservatism of Reagan and Gingrich. As for the cultural legacy, hemlines have dropped back from the record heights they reached in the 60s, but the rates of illegitimacy, divorce, and recreational drug use have just kept climbing. The Republican congressional revolution may again reshape American politics, but for the last 25 years we have been living in the shadow of the 1960s.

In *Telltale Hearts: The Origins and Impact of the Vietnam Antiwar Movement* (St. Martin's Press, 370 pages, $24.95), Adam Garfinkle offers a new take on the central force of the 1960s, the antiwar movement. Garfinkle, a resident scholar at the Foreign Policy Research Institute, aims to show that, far from having caused or even hastened America's withdrawal from Vietnam, the antiwar movement had the opposite effect. Since the war was a mistake, as Garfinkle sees it, the "utterly normal contours of American politics," he argues, would have compelled disengagement. But this natural process was inhibited by reaction against the antiwar movement. "The antics of the radical antiwar movement," he says, "deterred more Americans from opposing the war sooner because they were afraid of the company they would have to keep."

Garfinkle advances two other theses: that "the real causes" of 1960s radicalism "lay in the generic difficulties of coping with the revolutionary social life of post-World War II America"; and that "the main impact of the antiwar movement was not felt in Southeast Asia but in the United States." This last point, however, is nothing but a corollary of his first thesis. If the antiwar movement did not impel American withdrawal from Vietnam, then of course its main impact would have been here rather than there. But if Garfinkle is wrong and the antiwar movement was the motor driving American withdrawal, then its effects on American life, however large, pale in comparison to its consequences for the Indochinese: the slaughter of millions and the imposition of totalitarianism on them all.

To advance his second thesis, Garfinkle argues that "overwhelm-

Joshua Muravchik, a resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, was national chairman of the Young People's Socialist League from 1968 to 1973. His most recent book, The Imperative of American Leadership, *will be published by AEI early next year.*

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ingly in the case of the New Left, the young radical had difficult relations with parents and family." He bases this on the research of Stanley Rothman and Robert Lichter, authors of *Roots of Radicalism*. But Rothman and Lichter do not show that such friction occurred "overwhelmingly," only that it was somewhat more common among radical youngsters than among their non-radical peers. And to the extent that such familial friction existed, what does it explain? Did the youth of the 1960s as a whole have more friction with their parents than the apolitical youth of the 1950s or 1980s? Anyone who was around the New Left knows that many of its members, especially among the core activists and leaders, were the progeny of 1930s radicals.

Garfinkle echoes the conventional description of New Leftism as a generational revolt. But the political activism of many, I would guess most, New Leftists was smiled upon by their parents, whether old radicals or just liberals. And this may be true even of those New Leftists who had difficult relations with their parents. The New Left offspring of old Left parents rejected their parents' ideologies, and to that extent they were rebelling, but whether they knew it or not, they had absorbed much of their outlook from their parents.

Garfinkle mentions "red diaper babies" but belittles their importance. Indeed, he underestimates across the board the influence of old Leftism of various stripes. He attributes the origins of Vietnam protest largely to a group he labels "new pacifists," but they were mostly old radicals. He characterizes the League for Industrial Democracy (from which SDS sprang) as growing out of progressivism, but it was basically a Socialist party front. And he mentions the liaison with Hanoi established by Cora Weiss, whom he describes as heir to the Helena Rubinstein cosmetics empire, when in fact the firm was Fabergé and Weiss's more important inheritance was a family tradition of admiration for the Soviet Union.

In addition to the legacy of their parents' radicalism, another unique experience shaped the 1960s radicals, of whom I was one. We came of age during the emergence of the civil rights movement. Many of us joined it. And for even more of us, the civil rights struggle was the first public issue that we followed. From the perspective of maturity, it is possible to see that America's terrible injustice to its black citizens was a great anomaly for a country whose record in so many other respects was worthy of pride. The civil rights issue was unusual in another way, as well: It boiled down to a clear choice of right and wrong, whereas most policy issues involve many shades of gray. Therefore, those of us who were weaned on the civil rights struggle were predisposed to believe ill of our country and also to see political issues in Manichean terms, two characteristics that became hallmarks of 1960s radicalism.

Nor do I find convincing Garfinkle's main thesis—that the antiwar movement impeded rather than impelled America's withdrawal from Vietnam. Oddly, very little of the book after the first chapter is devoted to proving the case. Garfinkle offers only two pieces of evidence. He cites polling data showing that many Americans were more opposed to the antiwar movement than to the war. And he refers to a book by Melvin Small, who relates that an array of former high officials in the Johnson administration told him that the antiwar movement had no impact on their decisions. (Nonetheless, as Garfinkle tells us, Small concluded that the movement was instrumental in securing U.S. withdrawal.)

Whatever Johnson administration officials may have told interviewers, it was Johnson himself, as Garfinkle shows tellingly, who made the crucial step toward capitulation in Vietnam when he withdrew from the 1968 election and announced conciliatory gestures toward Hanoi. Who can doubt that Johnson's relish of his office was dimmed by the revilement to which he was subjected, the ubiqui-

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tous pickets chanting, "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today?" And it was not only Johnson who was affected. In the last pages of his book, Garfinkle offers a cogent speculation that goes far toward refuting his own case. Speaking of the "self-doubts of the liberal American political class of that time," he says:

> Many government leaders . . . privately accepted the criticisms of their most pernicious adversaries, or were emotionally influenced by their passion if not their content. Most likely, their generally liberal sensitivities connected them more firmly to the protesters' fierce emotions than to the "silent majority" that supported staying the course or escalating the war.

As Garfinkle notes, Johnson recorded in his memoirs that "all the advisers expressed deep concern about the divisions in our country." Many ordinary citizens worried, too. That is why the polls Garfinkle cites showing the unpopularity of the antiwar movement miss the point. He seems to assume that the thinking of the public is ideologically linear, that dislike of the antiwar movement would translate into support of the war. But, for many, wanting the antiwar movement to go away only made them want the war to end and made them impatient with the officials who had gotten us into this mess.

Besides inner doubts and disappointments, the other factor that contributed to Johnson's decision to withdraw from the election and de-escalate the war was the surprising showing in the New Hampshire primary of Sen. Eugene McCarthy, whose campaign became the vehicle for the antiwar movement.

Though this would seem to refute Garfinkle's thesis, he discounts it by arguing that "the antiwar movement succeeded . . . only to the extent that antiwar sentiment became reliberalized through the Democratic Party." Well perhaps, but so what? Although it may be possible to distinguish antiwar liberals from radicals, it was all one movement. Garfinkle tells us, for example, that the radical "Mobilization" and the liberal "Moratorium" shared a building. Many of the same individuals who participated in "radical" demonstrations "reliberalized" to canvass voters for McCarthy. That was the meaning of the 1968 slogan "Neat and clean for Gene."

But you do not have to accept any of Garfinkle's main arguments to enjoy and profit from his painstaking reconstruction of the history of the antiwar movement. He has undertaken prodigious research (he is a few years too young to have experienced most of it firsthand). For those who were close to the scene, it is fun revisiting the arguments between Norman Thomas and David Dellinger, the brief triumph of the Trotskyist Socialist Workers party as the leader of mass antiwar demonstrations, and the final break-up of SDS (Students for a Democratic Society) at a convention that pitted doctrinaire Maoists against a somewhat less doctrinaire faction calling itself the Up-Against-the-Wall Motherfuckers.

Thus did its extreme segments flame out, but the movement they left behind triumphed, choking off U.S. aid to the governments of South Vietnam and Cambodia, serving those nations up to the Communists. And, building on the McCarthy campaign, the movement succeeded as well in making the Democratic party its own. The firmness of its grip has been demonstrated anew by Bill Clinton, who campaigned as a different kind of Democrat but has governed as one who cut his teeth in the movement and bears its indelible imprint. ♦

Reminiscence

Drinks Before Lunch With Kingsley Amis

By Eric Felten

It would have given Kingsley Amis no end of pleasure to learn that his *New York Times* obituary gave him credit for writing a number of novels that made it to the silver screen, most notably *Lord Jim*. "Laziness," Amis told me one bright September morning in Wales, "laziness has become the chief characteristic of journalism, displacing incompetence." And how; *Lord Jim* is, of course, by Joseph Conrad. *Lucky Jim* was the title Amis gave to his famous first novel, published in 1954.

Amis delivered his barb with a polish that betrayed practice. I wasn't the first journalist to visit him at the Swansea house of his friend Stuart Thomas, nor the first to sink into the amorphous couch against the wall while Amis commanded the center of the room in a straight-backed chair, the picture of diffidence. Nor, I think, was I the first he had taunted with intimations of sloth and stupidity. Amis carefully cultivated his reputation as a tough interview.

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I had hesitated to meet Amis, for much the same reasons that Amis avoided acquaintance with Evelyn Waugh: "I realized that my admiration for his works might have been seriously dinted by whatever form of social drubbing I would inevitably have got from him had we ever met," Amis wrote in his *Memoirs*. The morning promised to fulfill that dread. For starters, thanks to British Rail, I showed up an hour late, a rudeness that Amis did not fail to comment upon. Then there was the slight grimace—was there a groan?—when I pulled a tape-recorder from my bag. In the following hour he never quite lost a pained expression that left no doubt that my questions bored him.

I like to think now, four years later, that my tiresome presence was not solely responsible for Amis's discomfiture: He was gouty. "When I was young I thought the gout was funny," he told me later in the day, "but now that I have it, it isn't funny in the least." Whatever the cause of his displeasure, Amis finally put an end to the tortured interview. "So," he asked with an obligatory tipping of the wrist and the first hint of a smile I had seen from him, "are you a drinking man?"

"Sure," I lied.

Amis called a cab, and soon we were at the bar of the Swansea Yacht Club. Or perhaps more accurately, a bar called the Swansea Yacht Club. Aside from some photos on the walls of sepia men on sepia boats, and a few nautical flags on a yardarm outside, it wasn't clear what relationship the club had with yachting. The sunny corner table we settled into did have a lovely view of the small harbor—yachts, or at least some boats, were visible. The view was soon to be obstructed by some horrible new fast-food shack, Amis said with a distaste he seemed to relish.

I knew I was in trouble when Amis started off with a double whiskey, especially since he didn't have to ask for it: "The usual, Mr. Amis?" I had the good sense at least not to attempt to match him drink for drink; I settled for a relatively benign pint of bitter. It's not that I don't drink; I just don't drink much. Certainly not enough to survive three double whiskeys before lunch.

The drinks did Amis no damage. In fact, they did him a world of good. The Scotch deserved much of the credit for Amis's improved attitude, but I imagine that his nascent good humor also had something to do with the banishment of tape recorder and notebook. The boring ritual of polite interrogation was over. Soon we were joined by his friend Thomas, and for most of the next couple of hours we happily regaled one another with the outrages of the Left.

Once it became apparent that my magazine expense account was picking up the tab for the festivities, we hobbled off to lunch at a trattoria called The Bee's Knees, where there were cocktails to be had, and wine with the fish.

The subject turned to jazz, and Amis turned serious. He wasn't content simply to hold the beboppers, hardboppers, postboppers, and worse up to scorn. There was none of the facile ridicule that had made the last hours so entertaining. The music he loved had been killed, and the eulogy he delivered was not glib. It wasn't just amelodic excess that destroyed jazz for Amis, it was something at the core of the music, something sad and ugly and visible even in the 1950s when Amis saw Miles Davis at a New York club; there was no joy.

After lunch, Amis and Thomas wouldn't let me take a cab back to the train station: They insisted on driving me there in Thomas's yellow Ford. On the way we passed the campus of Swansea University, where Amis taught literature and collected absurdities for *Lucky Jim*. It prompted him to start telling me about the new novel he had just begun writing. "The story is about a middle-aged professor of Russian literature and poetry who is stumbling into having an affair with a Russian girl who is a poet of sorts. To sleep with her he'll have to tell her that her horrible poetry—it's so bad that it pains him—is good," Amis said. "I think I know what he'll do," he added mischievously. I did my best to offer a knowing leer.

A few minutes later I was on my way back to London, my stomach worried by the rocking of the train.

It was a surprise, a few years later, to read *The Russian Girl*. There was the hapless professor, and there was the Russian poetaster. But the book did not devolve into the sort of exercise in misogyny that had marred many of Amis's later novels.

Nor was it merely the comic romp reviewers praised it for being. Professor Richard Vaisey was not corrupted by Anna Danilova, though in the end he does lie about her poems: "'In my judgment these poems of yours are of high quality, as high as any written in our time.'" He lies, not to get her into bed, but because he loves her, and can't bear to crush her hopes. With that love he not only wins her heart, but transforms her into an honest-to-God poet.

I don't know what happened between the ride in the yellow Ford and the publication of *The Russian Girl*. Perhaps the change was nothing more interesting than the old saw about characters in novels having lives of their own quite beyond the control of their authors. I doubt it. Maybe instead Amis realized that much of his work suffered, like Davis's oeuvre, from a loss of joy. One way or another, before his death at 73, he found that joy again. ♦

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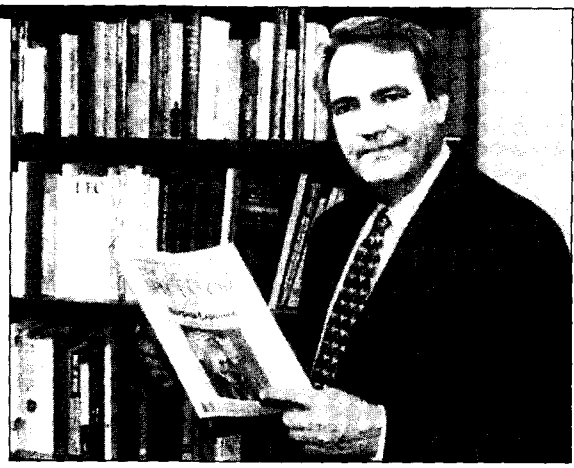
American Spectators . . . more than merely alive.



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Everyone knows what happens when companies have to compete for your business: ***you win.*** Because ***prices go down*** – and ***value goes up.*** And that's just what will happen if Congress opens long distance, cable and local phone service to competition. It's time to finish the job – and pass telecommunications reform ***now.***

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There are two worlds—theory and reality.

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